





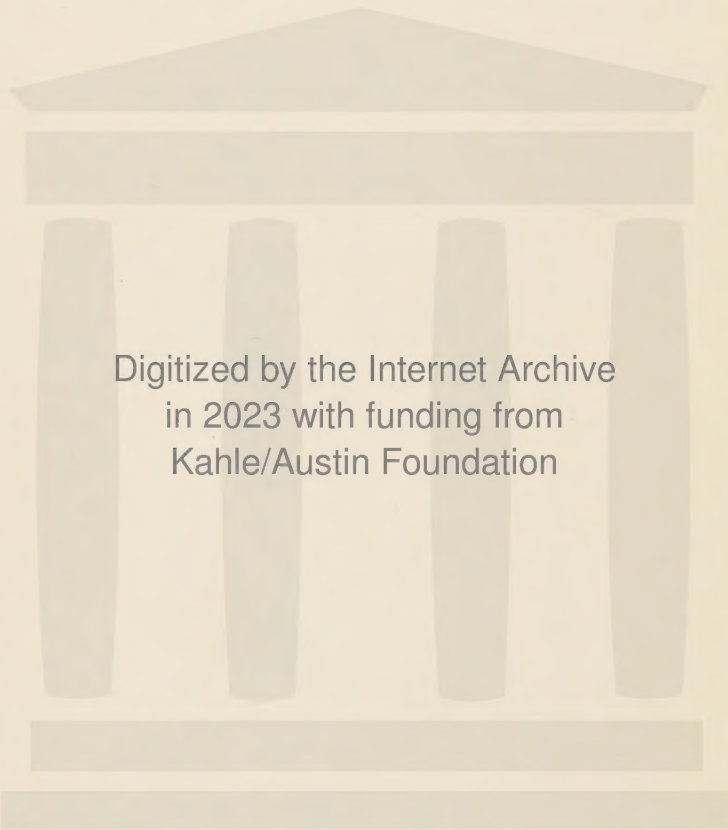
QUEENS COLLEGE

BOOKSTORE

USED BOOK

PRICE

470



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2023 with funding from  
Kahle/Austin Foundation



# MAN IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

## A SOURCE BOOK





# Man in Contemporary Society

A SOURCE BOOK PREPARED BY THE  
CONTEMPORARY CIVILIZATION STAFF OF  
COLUMBIA COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

*Volume I*



NEW YORK: MORNINGSIDE HEIGHTS

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOG CARD NUMBER: 55-9067

COPYRIGHT © 1955, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS, NEW YORK

*First printing 1955*

*Second printing July, 1956*

*Third printing September, 1956*

*Fourth printing 1959*

PUBLISHED IN GREAT BRITAIN, CANADA, INDIA, AND PAKISTAN  
BY THE OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS  
LONDON, TORONTO, BOMBAY, AND KARACHI

MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



## PREFACE

CONTEMPORARY Western society, despite its unique instruments of communication, despite its enormous self-concern and its passion for the disclosure of fact, is peculiarly elusive subject matter. The age of opinion polls, interviews, and forums, of endless autobiographies, confessions, digests, and investigations, ironically resists understanding and compels us to dig deeply with complex tools. Largely upon the academic community (the community supposed by popular myth to be concealed from the real world) falls the responsibility of finding or devising the best of the answers and the best of the perspectives, however incomplete they may prove to be. These two volumes of readings on *Man in Contemporary Society* make no pretense of definitive social diagnosis; still less are they concerned with prognosis. They are concerned mainly to accumulate and organize pronouncements that are truly relevant to the understanding of the present.

The "present," when closely scrutinized, inevitably expands into the present not only of this year but of this decade, this generation, and this century. Among the writings here invoked for their bearing on the present, one originated as recently as 1954, another as far back as 1861. Each in its own way helps to illuminate the contemporary world. Just what writings, and how many, and of what kind, are included in any collection depends upon the purpose for which the collection is intended, upon space, time, and fallible judgment. The present body of readings has been prepared with the needs of the second (sophomore) year of the two-year Columbia College Contemporary Civilization sequence primarily in view. Like the previously published *Introduction to Contemporary Civilization in the West* and *Chapters in Western Civilization*, used in the first year's work, these "source books" provide the reading matter of an established course of study. The materials included in them were brought together during some five years of experimentation, during which time they were issued, for use by Columbia College students exclusively, in less permanent, unbound form. While the decision to publish them in a printed edition at this time was made with the requirements of Contemporary Civilization primarily in mind, in part that decision rested upon the conviction that the materials might also be found useful in other institutions, in other courses. The Editorial Committee has sought to assemble readings exhibiting great diversity and yet at the same time a high degree of interrelatedness and thematic continuity, materials which in collective

scope might satisfy the needs of different users. All such users will have work to do. For most of the selections do not lend themselves to simple assimilation. They require of the reader or discussant a critical responsiveness, and a willingness to encounter unsuspected problems no less than an inclination to resolve problems already discerned. These volumes aim, as far as possible, to provide full, sustained arguments and formulations, rather than briefly stated, epigrammatic, or summed-up ideas.

The contours and forces of society are of course delineated not only by its professional students, the social scientists, but by all those whose products are concerned with the motives, purposes, relations, and ideals of men. Accordingly the Editorial Committee, reflecting the Contemporary Civilization tradition, has not overly troubled itself with the question whether each and every reading embodies work in the "social sciences" or "social studies." The products of philosophers, artists, theologians, and natural scientists can hardly be neglected; nor, in some instances, can we find testimony superior to that of practical men of politics. Who, in any event, is to say what are the precise boundaries of the "social studies?" For the most part, contemporary society yields its traits not to a frontal assault, not to a reportorial technique, but to the subtler constructions of imagination and analysis, when both are grounded in the sense of fact. The student, on his side, stands to gain as much from writers whose methods or conclusions he resists as from those with whom he is predisposed to agree. In the preparation of contemporary "source" materials, it is not always possible and not always desirable to choose the best-known or most obvious expression of a given viewpoint, or to choose those viewpoints which happen to be in wide current favor. The staff and its Editorial Committee have primarily had the student's needs in mind, and have often made suggestiveness and challenge the principal criteria for the choice of a reading.

The educational practice of Columbia College for the past thirty-five years, and now possibly more than ever, has emphasized the importance of historical awareness in the student. It is therefore no accident that a study of the most essential, persistent social factors relating to contemporary man is preceded at Columbia by an intensive consideration of the broad post-medieval context in which his society is embedded. But the first-year study of the Contemporary Civilization Program, although primarily historical in approach, is pervaded by analytical discussion; and the second-year study, although primarily analytical in approach, attempts to preserve historical perspective.

The Contemporary Civilization staff has no desire to urge—for it does not believe—that its own way of using these readings is best for all educational institutions. It has (1) included in each of the two volumes far more mate-



rial than can profitably be covered in a single semester's or half-year's work, and (2) organized each volume in such a way that it can be used, if necessary, independently of the other. It has provided room for experimentation with different combinations of readings. Notwithstanding the firmness and growth of its own tradition in liberal education, it proposes no educational technique as universally applicable, except perhaps that of questioning the adequacy of any technique at any time.

The collection, divided about equally between the two volumes, comprises over one hundred separate items, selected from a wide range of contemporary authors. In most cases some measure of editing has been necessary to prepare the selection for use in the classroom. Such editing has involved (1) omission of passages not directly pertinent to the teaching needs of the course; (2) slight insertions necessary to insure continuity within the abridged piece and to render it as self-contained as possible. In all instances deletions have been indicated by suspension points in the text, while insertions have been printed enclosed in brackets. References and notes have been omitted except where such apparatus is manifestly needed to clarify the text. At the same time all passages in foreign languages, save those thoroughly assimilated to English, appearing in the texts have been translated in bracketed footnotes. Throughout its work, the Editorial Committee has been conscious of its responsibility to adhere scrupulously to the author's meaning and to tamper with his language to the least degree possible. It is appropriate here to acknowledge the cooperation of numerous publishing houses, in this country and abroad, toward the use of copyright material. Such acknowledgment, together with bibliographical data, is formally made for each selection in an unkeyed footnote appearing at the bottom of the first page of each selection.

The accumulation, organization, and preparation of the materials contained in these volumes—and of the course whose needs they directly serve—has been a truly cooperative enterprise. The indispensable condition of that enterprise has been the learned resources and critical enthusiasm of the entire Contemporary Civilization teaching staff. Many individuals have made invaluable personal contributions. Attention should be called to the fact that three of the selections represent translations of writings hitherto unavailable in English: Kurt Shell translated "The Origins of Anti-Capitalistic Mass Spirit" by Robert Michels and the selection from "Beyond Capitalism" by Paul Sering; Leonardo C. De Morelos translated the selection from "Seven Essays Interpreting the Peruvian Reality" by José C. Mariátegui. The selection from "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism" by Max Weber which appears here is a fresh translation by Peter J. Gay. George L. Kline thoroughly revised and corrected

the existing translations of "Terrorism and Communism" by Karl Kautsky and "Dictatorship vs. Democracy" by Leon Trotsky. The introductions to the selections have been written by: Harold Barger, Justus Buchler, Robert Cumming, Emanuel Chill, Robert L. Carey, Herbert A. Deane, Leonard Feldstein, Martin Fleisher, Morton Fried, Julian H. Franklin, Peter J. Gay, Marvin Harris, Sidney Klein, George L. Kline, Harold Larrabee, Harvey Levin, C. Wright Mills, Donald O'Connell, Kurt Shell, James Shenton, Fritz Stern, Jacob Weissman, Bernard Wishy, and by members of the Editorial Committee. Mrs. Eleanor W. Blau has served long, faithfully, and with great efficiency as the secretary to the Editorial Committee. Raymond J. Dixon of Columbia University Press has assisted the Editorial Committee with his expert advice, has solved many editorial problems, and has supervised the production of the volumes. Miss Mary Morris, in her capacity as Administrative Assistant to the Dean of Columbia College, has facilitated the work of the Editorial Committee in innumerable important ways.

The Editorial Committee, on behalf of the teaching staff, wishes publicly, if inadequately, to recognize the debt it owes to the scholarship, pedagogical skill, and academic leadership of Justus Buchler, Chairman of the Contemporary Civilization Program. It wishes also to thank Robert L. Carey, who, while serving as Temporary Chairman of the Contemporary Civilization Program during the academic year 1953-1954, did much to assist the Committee in its deliberations and labors.

Finally the teaching staff and the Editorial Committee wish to express gratitude to Lawrence H. Chamberlain, Dean of Columbia College, who, more than any single individual, has made it possible for this publication to be brought to its present conclusion.

The undersigned are the current members of the Editorial Committee. Past members have been: John W. Alexander, Harold Barger, Charles Frankel, Julian H. Franklin, Peter J. Gay, Henry F. Graff, C. Lowell Harriss, Richard Hofstadter, Walter Metzger, Elman Service, and Stephen W. Rousseas.

*Editorial Committee*

JOSEPH L. BLAU

RALPH H. BOWEN

ARTHUR C. DANTO

SIDNEY GELBER

GEORGE T. MATTHEWS, *Chairman*

RICHARD M. MORSE

*Columbia University*  
*February, 1955*

# CONTENTS

## MAN, MIND, AND CULTURE

I. THE CULTURAL CONTEXT OF HUMAN NATURE	I
JOHN DEWEY, 3 <i>Human Nature and Conduct</i>	
✓ BRONISLAW MALINOWSKI, 22 <i>The Dynamics of Culture Change</i>	
LAWRENCE K. FRANK, 33 <i>Cultural Control and Physiological Autonomy</i>	
2. THE HUMAN ASPECT OF THE HUMAN ANIMAL	39
ERNST CASSIRER, 41 <i>An Essay on Man</i>	
LESLIE A. WHITE, 58 <i>On the Use of Tools by Primates</i>	
EDWARD SAPIR, 65 <i>Language</i> <i>Communication</i>	
JOHAN HUIZINGA, 83 <i>Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture</i>	
3. CULTURE: ITS DIVERSITIES AND UNIFORMITIES	III
RUTH BENEDICT, 113 ✓ <i>Patterns of Culture</i>	
OSWALD SPENGLER, 135 <i>The Decline of the West</i>	
MORRIS E. OPLER, 144 <i>Themes as Dynamic Forces in Culture</i> <i>An Application of the Theory of Themes in Culture</i>	
BRONISLAW MALINOWSKI, 163 <i>Sex and Repression in Savage Society</i>	
✓ A. L. KROEBER AND CLYDE KLUCKHOHN, 192 <i>General Features of Culture</i>	

## SELF, PERSON, AND SOCIETY

## I. THE SELF

211

- J Sigmund Freud, 213  
*A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*  
*An Outline of Psychoanalysis*

George Herbert Mead, 254  
*Mind, Self and Society*

## 2. THE PERSON

273

Harry Stack Sullivan, 275  
*Conceptions of Modern Psychiatry*

John Dollard and Neal Miller, 296  
*Personality and Psychotherapy*

Karen Horney, 323  
*The Neurotic Personality of Our Time*

Martin Buber, 337  
*Between Man and Man*

## 3. INDIVIDUAL FULFILLMENT AND SOCIAL COMPULSION

363

- J Sigmund Freud, 365  
*Civilization and Its Discontents*

Émile Durkheim, 383  
*Suicide: A Study in Sociology*

John Dewey, 421  
*Reconstruction in Philosophy*

Erich Fromm, 434  
*Escape from Freedom*

Jean Piaget, 455  
*The Moral Judgment of the Child*

## THE ANATOMY OF SOCIETY: COMMUNITY AND POLITY

## I. CONCEPTS OF COMMUNITY

481

Émile Durkheim, 483  
*The Division of Labor in Society*



# CONTENTS

xi

HENRY SUMNER MAINE, 516

*Ancient Law*

FERDINAND TÖNNIES, 543

*Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft*

ROBERT REDFIELD, 568

*The Folk Society*

OSCAR LEWIS, 590

*Life in a Mexican Village: Tepoztlán Restudied*

EDWARD SAPIR, 608

*Culture, Genuine and Spurious*

## 2. BASES FOR POLITY: CUSTOM, LAW, AND AUTHORITY

629

✓ ROBERT M. MACIVER, 631

*The Modern State*

✓ MAX WEBER, 651

*Politics as a Vocation*

FRANZ L. NEUMANN, 683

*Approaches to the Study of Political Power*

## 3. DIVISIVE AND UNIFYING FACTORS IN MODERN COMMUNITY

699

MAX WEBER, 701

*Class and Status*

C. WRIGHT MILLS, 716

*White Collar*

ROBERT MICHELS, 739

*The Origins of Anticapitalistic Mass Spirit*

JOHN DOLLARD, 766

*Caste and Class in a Southern Town*

## 4. IDEAL VALUES OF A DEMOCRATIC POLITY

789

A. V. DICEY, 791

*Introduction to the Study of the Law of the Constitution*

L. T. HOBHOUSE, 803

*Liberalism*

R. H. TAWNEY, 825

*Equality*

GUNNAR MYRDAL, 844

*An American Dilemma* [I]

JOHN DEWEY, 866

*Freedom and Culture*

5. INHERENT COMPLEXITIES OF CONTEMPORARY DEMOCRACY

881

E. H. CARR, 883

*The New Society*

ROBERT MICHELS, 897

*Political Parties*

GUNNAR MYRDAL, 922

*An American Dilemma* [II]

JULIAN H. FRANKLIN, 934

*Bureaucracy and Freedom*

ROSCOE POUND, 949

*A Survey of Social Interests*

DAVID RIESMAN, 971

*The Lonely Crowd*

ROBERT M. MACIVER, 988

*The Web of Government*

# MAN, MIND, AND CULTURE

## I. THE CULTURAL CONTEXT OF HUMAN NATURE





## JOHN DEWEY

JOHN DEWEY (1859–1952), born in Burlington, Vermont, was educated at the University of Vermont and at Johns Hopkins. Before going to Columbia as professor of philosophy in 1904, he taught at the Universities of Michigan, Minnesota, and Chicago. Relatively early in his long and full life he emerged as one of the most profound and most systematic of American philosophers. A vast number of people unacquainted with the technical foundations of Dewey's thought have nevertheless had access to his achievements in psychology, in the philosophy of education, and in the theory of politics. Dewey was a keen student of the ideas and institutions of the past, a close observer of the day-to-day relations of common life. From the time he taught village school in Vermont to the time of his death he exemplified his own persistent emphasis on the continuity of reflection and action. For nothing was more central in his philosophy than the basal conviction—carefully developed in many ways—that the principles and methods of logic are rooted in the problematic situations of men; that moral ideals necessarily reflect human needs and aspirations; that education is a process of extending and transforming values; that art is not an escape from experience but a perfection and illumination of it; that the religious experience of man, his unifying perspective, is best understood not as some particular expression of clannishness or of rationalized dogma but as the abiding faith in intelligence and in human fellowship.

In recognition of its diverse functions, Dewey variously described philosophy as the formulation “of the generic traits manifested by existences of all kinds”; as the “conversion of such culture as exists into consciousness”; and as “criticism of criticisms” or “the critical method of developing methods of criticism.” Originally stimulated, as so many of his contemporaries were, by the work of Hegel (1770–1831), Dewey subsequently became one of the major spokesmen of philosophic naturalism, as well as one of the leading formulators of the so-called pragmatic conception of knowledge and meaning. His writings are still little known in Europe, though in this respect he continues to share the fate of other American philosophers. In this country, despite his influence, he has been subject to much misinterpretation, caused partly, no doubt, by the involved character of his literary style, but mainly by scant attention to his own words and excessive attention to the labels “naturalism” and “pragmatism,” which have come to mean anything to anybody.

Dewey's work in the theory of knowledge and of method is represented by the collaborative volume *Studies in Logical Theory* (1903); *How We Think* (1910, revised 1933); *Essays in Experimental Logic* (1916); and *Logic, the Theory of Inquiry* (1938). His principal writings in moral philosophy are *Outlines of a Critical Theory of Ethics* (1891); *Ethics* (with J. H. Tufts, 1908, revised 1932); *Human Nature and Conduct* (1922); and *Theory of Valuation* (1939). His chief educational writings are *The School and Society* (1899, revised 1915); *Schools of Tomorrow* (with Evelyn Dewey, 1915); *Democracy and Education* (1916); and *Expe-*

rience and Education (1938). His political philosophy is expressed in *The Public and Its Problems* (1927); *Individualism, Old and New* (1930); *Liberalism and Social Action* (1935); and *Freedom and Culture* (1939). His views in aesthetics and the philosophy of religion are to be found, respectively, in *Art as Experience* (1934) and *A Common Faith* (1934). For the understanding of his general philosophic position, the relevant works are *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy* (1910); *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (1920); *The Quest for Certainty* (1929); *Philosophy and Civilization* (1931); and above all, *Experience and Nature* (1925, revised 1929).

The currents of late nineteenth-century speculation concerning the nature of man were profoundly affected by the rise of evolutionary speculation in biology. The conception of gradual development under the spur of the necessity for adjustment to environmental conditions served as a key to unlock many doors. Soon leading thinkers began to found their work on the presumption that man himself and all his works and ways were potentially intelligible as special cases of evolutionary development. The goals of previous speculation were inverted; instead of searching out permanent, static fixities in human nature, students in the various disciplines concerned with the study of man turned their attention to the dynamic aspects of human organization that enabled evolutionary adjustments to take place.

It is one of the many distinctions of John Dewey (whose earliest work appeared in the 1880's) to have realized that the wide variety of patterns of behavior ("conduct") could not be explained as proceeding from the combinations and permutations of a relatively small number of "instincts." Rather, he insisted, there had to be a very large number of possible forces, which he preferred to call "impulses." A human being has the potentiality for an indefinite number of behavior patterns because he is constituted by an indefinite number of impulses. This view of human nature as compounded of endlessly various strivings is important in itself as a corrective to the limited theories of many of Dewey's contemporaries. It is perhaps even more important as the foundation on which Dewey built his philosophy of education and his social philosophy of democracy.

Furthermore, Dewey did not pay mere lip service to the idea that adjustment to environmental conditions is basic to human evolution. On the contrary, he gave the concept of man's "environment," both natural and social, fresh significance by his view that every action of man is revealed through analysis to be an interaction. Activity is not a one-way street. We cannot regard environment merely as a *deus ex machina* to get the process of human development started and then forget about it. For in reacting to his environment, man reacts *on* his environment. The pattern of conduct that man evolves to meet an environmental need changes the environmental conditions and thus creates a new environment to which man must again adjust. There is, thus, a continuous pattern of interaction or "transaction" taking place, and we cannot restrict environment to the role of stimulant and man to the role of respondent; for the process is, rather, one in which each occupies for the other both the role of stimulant and that of respondent.

In the following selection, taken from *Human Nature and Conduct* (1922), Dewey explores the relation between human nature and its social environment in the light of these general evolutionary principles of impulsive flexibility and social interaction.

*HUMAN NATURE AND CONDUCT**Part II: The Place of Impulse in Conduct*

## SECTION II: PLASTICITY OF IMPULSE

In the case of the young it is patent that impulses are highly flexible starting points for activities which are diversified according to the ways in which they are used. Any impulse may become organized into almost any disposition according to the way it interacts with surroundings. Fear may become abject cowardice, prudent caution, reverence for superiors or respect for equals; an agency for credulous swallowing of absurd superstitions or for wary scepticism. A man may be chiefly afraid of the spirits of his ancestors, of officials, of arousing the disapproval of his associates, of being deceived, of fresh air, or of Bolshevism. The actual outcome depends upon how the impulse of fear is interwoven with other impulses. This depends in turn upon the outlets and inhibitions supplied by the social environment.

In a definite sense, then, a human society is always starting afresh. It is always in process of renewing, and it endures only because of renewal. We speak of the peoples of southern Europe as Latin peoples. Their existing languages depart widely from one another and from the Latin mother tongue. Yet there never was a day when this alteration of speech was intentional or explicit. Persons always meant to reproduce the speech they heard from their elders and supposed they were succeeding. This fact may stand as a kind of symbol of the reconstruction wrought in habits because of the fact that they can be transmitted and be made to endure only through the medium of the crude activities of the young or through contact with persons having different habits.

For the most part, this continuous alteration has been unconscious and unintended. Immature, undeveloped activity has succeeded in modifying adult organized activity accidentally and surreptitiously. But with the dawn of the idea of progressive betterment and an interest in new uses of impulses, there has grown up some consciousness of the extent to which a future new society of changed purposes and desires may be created by a deliberate humane treatment of the impulses of youth. This is the meaning of education; for a truly humane education consists in an intelligent direction of native activities in

---

This selection has been reprinted from *Human Nature and Conduct*, by John Dewey. By permission of Henry Holt and Company, Inc., Copyright 1922; Copyright 1950 by John Dewey, pp. 95-124 (1922 edition).

the light of the possibilities and necessities of the social situation. But for the most part, adults have given training rather than education. An impatient, premature mechanization of impulsive activity after the fixed pattern of adult habits of thought and affection has been desired. The combined effect of love of power, timidity in the face of the novel and a self-admiring complacency has been too strong to permit immature impulse to exercise its reorganizing potentialities. The younger generation has hardly even knocked frankly at the door of adult customs, much less been invited in to rectify through better education the brutalities and inequities established in adult habits. Each new generation has crept blindly and furtively through such chance gaps as have happened to be left open. Otherwise it has been modeled after the old.

We have already noted how original plasticity is warped and docility is taken mean advantage of. It has been used to signify not capacity to learn liberally and generously, but willingness to learn the customs of adult associates, ability to learn just those special things which those having power and authority wish to teach. Original modifiability has not been given a fair chance to act as trustee for a better human life. It has been loaded with convention, biased by adult convenience. It has been practically rendered into an equivalent of non-assertion of originality, a pliant accommodation to the embodied opinions of others.

Consequently docility has been identified with imitateness, instead of with power to re-make old habits, to re-create. Plasticity and originality have been opposed to each other. That the most precious part of plasticity consists in ability to form habits of independent judgment and of inventive initiation has been ignored. For it demands a more complete and intense docility to form flexible, easily re-adjusted habits than it does to acquire those which rigidly copy the ways of others. In short, among the native activities of the young are some that work toward accommodation, assimilation, reproduction, and others that work toward exploration, discovery and creation. But the weight of adult custom has been thrown upon retaining and strengthening tendencies toward conformity, and against those which make for variation and independence. The habits of the growing person are jealously kept within the limit of adult customs. The delightful originality of the child is tamed. Worship of institutions and personages themselves lacking in imaginative foresight, versatile observation and liberal thought, is enforced.

Very early in life sets of mind are formed without attentive thought, and these sets persist and control the mature mind. The child learns to avoid the shock of unpleasant disagreement, to find the easy way out, to appear to conform to customs which are wholly mysterious to him in order to get his own



way—that is to display some natural impulse without exciting the unfavorable notice of those in authority. Adults distrust the intelligence which a child has while making upon him demands for a kind of conduct that requires a high order of intelligence, if it is to be intelligent at all. The inconsistency is reconciled by instilling in him “moral” habits which have a maximum of emotional impressment and adamant hold with a minimum of understanding. These habitudes, deeply engrained before thought is awake and even before the day of experiences which can later be recalled, govern conscious later thought. They are usually deepest and most unget-at-able just where critical thought is most needed—in morals, religion and politics. These “infantilisms” account for the mass of irrationalities that prevail among men of otherwise rational tastes. These personal “hang-overs” are the cause of what the student of culture calls survivals. But unfortunately these survivals are much more numerous and pervasive than the anthropologist and historian are wont to admit. To list them would perhaps oust one from “respectable” society.

And yet the intimation never wholly deserts us that there are in the unformed activities of childhood and youth the possibilities of a better life for the community as well as for individuals here and there. This dim sense is the ground of our abiding idealization of childhood. For with all its extravagancies and uncertainties, its effusions and reticences, it remains a standing proof of a life wherein growth is normal not an anomaly, activity a delight not a task, and where habit-forming is an expansion of power not its shrinkage. Habit and impulse may war with each other, but it is a combat between the habits of adults and the impulses of the young, and not, as with the adult, a civil warfare whereby personality is rent asunder. Our usual measure for the “goodness” of children is the amount of trouble they make for grownups, which means of course the amount they deviate from adult habits and expectations. Yet by way of expiation we envy children their love of new experiences, their intentness in extracting the last drop of significance from each situation, their vital seriousness in things that to us are outworn.

We compensate for the harshness and monotony of our present insistence upon formed habits by imagining a future heaven in which we too shall respond freshly and generously to each incident of life. In consequence of our divided attitude, our ideals are self-contradictory. On the one hand, we dream of an attained perfection, an ultimate static goal, in which effort shall cease, and desire and execution be once and for all in complete equilibrium. We wish for a character which shall be steadfast, and we then conceive this desired faithfulness as something immutable, a character exactly the same yes-

terday, today and forever. But we also have a sneaking sympathy for the courage of an Emerson in declaring that consistency should be thrown to the winds when it stands between us and the opportunities of present life. We reach out to the opposite extreme of our ideal of fixity, and under the guise of a return to nature dream of a romantic freedom, in which *all* life is plastic to impulse, a continual source of improvised spontaneities and novel inspirations. We rebel against all organization and all stability. If modern thought and sentiment is to escape from this division in its ideals, it must be through utilizing released impulse as an agent of steady reorganization of custom and institutions.

While childhood is the conspicuous proof of the renewing habit rendered possible by impulse, the latter never wholly ceases to play its refreshing rôle in adult life. If it did, life would petrify, society stagnate. Instinctive reactions are sometimes too intense to be woven into a smooth pattern of habits. Under ordinary circumstances they appear to be tamed to obey their master, custom. But extraordinary crises release them and they show by wild violent energy how superficial is the control of routine. The saying that civilization is only skin deep, that a savage persists beneath the clothes of a civilized man, is the common acknowledgment of this fact. At critical moments of unusual stimuli the emotional outbreak and rush of instincts dominating all activity show how superficial is the modification which a rigid habit has been able to effect.

When we face this fact in its general significance, we confront one of the ominous aspects of the history of man. We realize how little the progress of man has been the product of intelligent guidance, how largely it has been a by-product of accidental upheavals, even though by an apologetic interest in behalf of some privileged institution we later transmute chance into providence. We have depended upon the clash of war, the stress of revolution, the emergence of heroic individuals, the impact of migrations generated by war and famine, the incoming of barbarians, to change established institutions. Instead of constantly utilizing unused impulse to effect continuous reconstruction, we have waited till an accumulation of stresses suddenly breaks through the dikes of custom.

It is often supposed that as old persons die, so must old peoples. There are many facts in history to support the belief. Decadence and degeneration seems to be the rule as age increases. An irruption of some uncivilized horde has then provided new blood and fresh life—so much so that history has been defined as a process of rebarbarization. In truth the analogy between a person and a nation with respect to senescence and death is defective. A nation is always renewed by the death of its old constituents and the birth of those

who are as young and fresh as ever were any individuals in the hey-day of the nation's glory. Not the nation but its customs get old. Its institutions petrify into rigidity; there is social arterial sclerosis. Then some people not overburdened with elaborate and stiff habits take up and carry on the moving process of life. The stock of fresh peoples is, however, approaching exhaustion. It is not safe to rely upon this expensive method of renewing civilization. We need to discover how to rejuvenate it from within. A normal perpetuation becomes a fact in the degree in which impulse is released and habit is plastic to the transforming touch of impulse. When customs are flexible and youth is educated as youth and not as premature adulthood, no nation grows old.

There always exists a goodly store of non-functioning impulses which may be drawn upon. Their manifestation and utilization is called conversion or regeneration when it comes suddenly. But they may be drawn upon continuously and moderately. Then we call it learning or educative growth. Rigid custom signifies not that there are no such impulses but that they are not organically taken advantage of. As matter of fact, the stiffer and the more encrusted the customs, the larger is the number of instinctive activities that find no regular outlet and that accordingly merely await a chance to get an irregular, uncoordinated manifestation. Routine habits never take up all the slack. They apply only where conditions remain the same or recur in uniform ways. They do not fit the unusual and novel.

Consequently rigid moral codes that attempt to lay down definite injunctions and prohibitions for every occasion in life turn out in fact loose and slack. Stretch ten commandments or any other number as far as you will by ingenious exegesis, yet acts unprovided for by them will occur. No elaboration of statute law can forestall variant cases and the need of interpretation *ad hoc*. Moral and legal schemes that attempt the impossible in the way of definite formulation compensate for explicit strictness in some lines by implicit looseness in others. The only truly severe code is the one which foregoes codification, throwing responsibility for judging each case upon the agents concerned, imposing upon them the burden of discovery and adaptation.

The relation which actually exists between undirected instinct and over-organized custom is illustrated in the two views that are current about savage life. The popular view looks at the savage as a wild man; as one who knows no controlling principles or rules of action, who freely follows his own impulse, whim or desire whenever it seizes him and wherever it takes him. Anthropologists are given to the opposed notion. They view savages as bondsmen to custom. They note the network of regulations that order his risings-up and his sittings-down, his goings-out and his comings-in. They



conclude that in comparison with civilized man the savage is a slave, governed by many inflexible tribal habitudes in conduct and ideas.

The truth about savage life lies in a combination of these two conceptions. Where customs exist they are of one pattern and binding on personal sentiment and thought to a degree unknown in civilized life. But since they cannot possibly exist with respect to all the changing detail of daily life, whatever is left uncovered by custom is free from regulation. It is therefore left to appetite and momentary circumstance. Thus enslavement to custom and license of impulse exist side by side. Strict conformity and unrestrained wildness intensify each other. This picture of life shows us in an exaggerated form the psychology current in civilized life whenever customs harden and hold individuals enmeshed. Within civilization, the savage still exists. He is known in his degree by oscillation between loose indulgence and stiff habit.

Impulse in short brings with itself the possibility but not the assurance of a steady reorganization of habits to meet new elements in new situations. The moral problem in child and adult alike as regards impulse and instinct is to utilize them for formation of new habits, or what is the same thing, the modification of an old habit so that it may be adequately serviceable under novel conditions. The place of impulse in conduct as a pivot of re-adjustment, re-organization, in habits may be defined as follows: On one side, it is marked off from the territory of arrested and encrusted habits. On the other side, it is demarcated from the region in which impulse is a law unto itself.<sup>1</sup> Generalizing these distinctions, a valid moral theory contrasts with all those theories which set up static goals (even when they are called perfection), and with those theories which idealize raw impulse and find in its spontaneities an adequate mode of human freedom. Impulse is a source, an indispensable source, of liberation; but only as it is employed in giving habits pertinence and freshness does it liberate power.

### SECTION III: CHANGING HUMAN NATURE

Incidentally we have touched upon a most far-reaching problem: The alterability of human nature. Early reformers, following John Locke, were inclined to minimize the significance of native activities, and to emphasize the possi-

<sup>1</sup> The use of the words instinct and impulse as practical equivalents is intentional, even though it may grieve critical readers. The word instinct taken alone is still too laden with the older notion that an instinct is always definitely organized and adapted—which for the most part is just what it is not in human beings. The word impulse suggests something primitive, yet loose, undirected, initial. Man can progress as beasts cannot, precisely because he has so many "instincts" that they cut across one another, so that most serviceable actions must be *learned*. In learning habits it is possible for man to learn the habit of learning. Then betterment becomes a conscious principle of life.

bilities inherent in practice and habit-acquisition. There was a political slant to this denial of the native and a priori, this magnifying of the accomplishments of acquired experience. It held out a prospect of continuous development, of improvement without end. Thus writers like Helvetius made the idea of the complete malleability of a human nature which originally is wholly empty and passive, the basis for asserting the omnipotence of education to shape human society, and the ground of proclaiming the infinite perfectibility of mankind.

Wary, experienced men of the world have always been sceptical of schemes of unlimited improvement. They tend to regard plans for social change with an eye of suspicion. They find in them evidences of the proneness of youth to illusion, or of incapacity on the part of those who have grown old to learn anything from experience. This type of conservative has thought to find in the doctrine of native instincts a scientific support for asserting the practical unalterability of human nature. Circumstances may change, but human nature remains from age to age the same. Heredity is more potent than environment, and human heredity is untouched by human intent. Effort for a serious alteration of human institutions is utopian. As things have been so they will be. The more they change the more they remain the same.

Curiously enough both parties rest their case upon just the factor which when it is analyzed weakens their respective conclusions. That is to say, the radical reformer rests his contention in behalf of easy and rapid change upon the psychology of habits, of institutions in shaping raw nature, and the conservative grounds his counter-assertion upon the psychology of instincts. As matter of fact, it is precisely custom which has the greatest inertia, which is least susceptible of alteration; while instincts are most readily modifiable through use, most subject to educative direction. The conservative who begs scientific support from the psychology of instincts is the victim of an out-grown psychology which derived its notion of instinct from an exaggeration of the fixity and certainty of the operation of instincts among the lower animals. He is a victim of a popular zoology of the bird, bee and beaver, which was largely framed to the greater glory of God. He is ignorant that instincts in the animals are less infallible and definite than is supposed, and also that the human being differs from the lower animals in precisely the fact that his native activities lack the complex ready-made organization of the animals' original abilities.

But the short-cut revolutionist fails to realize the full force of the things about which he talks most, namely institutions as embodied habits. Any one with knowledge of the stability and force of habit will hesitate to propose or

prophesy rapid and sweeping social changes. A social revolution may effect abrupt and deep alterations in external customs, in legal and political institutions. But the habits that are behind these institutions and that have, willy-nilly, been shaped by objective conditions, the habits of thought and feeling, are not so easily modified. They persist and insensibly assimilate to themselves the outer innovations—much as American judges nullify the intended changes of statute law by interpreting legislation in the light of common law. The force of lag in human life is enormous.

Actual social change is never so great as is apparent change. Ways of belief, of expectation, of judgment and attendant emotional dispositions of like and dislike, are not easily modified after they have once taken shape. Political and legal institutions may be altered, even abolished; but the bulk of popular thought which has been shaped to their pattern persists. This is why glowing predictions of the immediate coming of a social millennium terminate so uniformly in disappointment, which gives point to the standing suspicion of the cynical conservative about radical changes. Habits of thought outlive modifications in habits of overt action. The former are vital, the latter, without the sustaining life of the former, are muscular tricks. Consequently as a rule the moral effects of even great political revolutions, after a few years of outwardly conspicuous alterations, do not show themselves till after the lapse of years. A new generation must come upon the scene whose habits of mind have been formed under the new conditions. There is pith in the saying that important reforms cannot take real effect until after a number of influential persons have died. Where general and enduring moral changes do accompany an external revolution it is because appropriate habits of thought have previously been insensibly matured. The external change merely registers the removal of an external superficial barrier to the operation of existing intellectual tendencies.

Those who argue that social and moral reform is impossible on the ground that the Old Adam of human nature remains forever the same, attribute however to native activities the permanence and inertia that in truth belong only to acquired customs. To Aristotle slavery was rooted in aboriginal human nature. Native distinctions of quality exist such that some persons are by nature gifted with power to plan, command and supervise, and others possess merely capacity to obey and execute. Hence slavery is natural and inevitable. There is error in supposing that because domestic and chattel slavery has been legally abolished, therefore slavery as conceived by Aristotle has disappeared. But matters have at least progressed to a point where it is clear that slavery is a social state not a psychological necessity. Nevertheless the worldlywise Aris-

totles of today assert that the institutions of war and the present wage-system are so grounded in immutable human nature that effort to change them is foolish.

Like Greek slavery or feudal serfdom, war and the existing economic regime are social patterns woven out of the stuff of instinctive activities. Native human nature supplies the raw materials, but custom furnishes the machinery and the designs. War would not be possible without anger, pugnacity, rivalry, self-display, and such like native tendencies. Activity inheres in them and will persist under every condition of life. To imagine they can be eradicated is like supposing that society can go on without eating and without union of the sexes. But to fancy that they must eventuate in war is as if a savage were to believe that because he uses fibers having fixed natural properties in order to weave baskets, therefore his immemorial tribal patterns are also natural necessities and immutable forms.

From a humane standpoint our study of history is still all too primitive. It is possible to study a multitude of histories, and yet permit history, the record of the transitions and transformations of human activities, to escape us. Taking history in separate doses of this country and that, we take it as a succession of isolated finalities, each one in due season giving way to another, as supernumeraries succeed one another in a march across the stage. We thus miss the fact of history and also its lesson; the diversity of institutional forms and customs which the same human nature may produce and employ. An infantile logic, now happily expelled from physical science, taught that opium put men to sleep because of its dormitive potency. We follow the same logic in social matters when we believe that war exists because of bellicose instincts; or that a particular economic regime is necessary because of acquisitive and competitive impulses which must find expression.

Pugnacity and fear are no more native than are pity and sympathy. The important thing morally is the way these native tendencies interact, for their interaction may give a chemical transformation not a mechanical combination. Similarly, no social institution stands alone as a product of one dominant force. It is a phenomenon or function of a multitude of social factors in their mutual inhibitions and reinforcements. If we follow an infantile logic we shall reduplicate the unity of result in an assumption of unity of force behind it—as men once did with natural events, employing teleology as an exhibition of causal efficiency. We thus take the same social custom twice over: once as an existing fact and then as an original force which produced the fact, and utter sage platitudes about the unalterable workings of human nature or of race. As we account for war by pugnacity, for the capitalistic system by the



necessity of an incentive of gain to stir ambition and effort, so we account for Greece by power of esthetic observation, Rome by administrative ability, the middle ages by interest in religion and so on. We have constructed an elaborate political zoology as mythological and not nearly as poetic as the other zoology of phoenixes, griffins and unicorns. Native racial spirit, the spirit of the people or of the time, national destiny are familiar figures in this social zoo. As names for effects, for existing customs, they are sometimes useful. As names for explanatory forces they work havoc with intelligence.

An immense debt is due William James for the mere title of his essay: *The Moral Equivalents of War*. It reveals with a flash of light the true psychology. Clans, tribes, races, cities, empires, nations, states have made war. The argument that this fact proves an ineradicable belligerent instinct which makes war forever inevitable is much more respectable than many arguments about the immutability of this and that social tradition. For it has the weight of a certain empirical generality back of it. Yet the suggestion of an *equivalent* for war calls attention to the medley of impulses which are casually bunched together under the caption of belligerent impulse; and it calls attention to the fact that the elements of this medley may be woven together into many differing types of activity, some of which may function the native impulses in much better ways than war has ever done.

Pugnacity, rivalry, vainglory, love of booty, fear, suspicion, anger, desire for freedom from the conventions and restrictions of peace, love of power and hatred of oppression, opportunity for novel displays, love of home and soil, attachment to one's people and to the altar and the hearth, courage, loyalty, opportunity to make a name, money or a career, affection, piety to ancestors and ancestral gods—all of these things and many more make up the war-like force. To suppose there is some one unchanging native force which generates war is as naive as the usual assumption that our enemy is actuated solely by the meaner of the tendencies named and we only by the nobler. In earlier days there was something more than a verbal connection between pugnacity and fighting; anger and fear moved promptly through the fists. But between a loosely organized pugilism and the highly organized warfare of today there intervenes a long economic, scientific and political history. Social conditions rather than an old and unchangeable Adam have generated wars; the ineradicable impulses that are utilized in them are capable of being drafted into many other channels. The century that has witnessed the triumph of the scientific doctrine of the convertibility of natural energies ought not to balk at the lesser miracle of social equivalences and substitutes.



It is likely that if Mr. James had witnessed the world war, he would have modified his mode of treatment. So many new transformations entered into the war, that the war seems to prove that though an equivalent has not been found for war, the psychological forces traditionally associated with it have already undergone profound changes. We may take the *Iliad* as a classic expression of war's traditional psychology as well as the source of the literary tradition regarding its motives and glories. But where are Helen, Hector and Achilles in modern warfare? The activities that evoke and incorporate a war are no longer personal love, love of glory, or the soldier's love of his own privately amassed booty but are of a collective, prosaic political and economic nature.

Universal conscription, the general mobilization of all agricultural and industrial forces of the folk not engaged in the trenches, the application of every conceivable scientific and mechanical device, the mass movements of soldiery regulated from a common center by a depersonalized general staff: these factors relegate the traditional psychological apparatus of war to a now remote antiquity. The motives once appealed to are out of date; they do not now induce war. They simply are played upon after war has been brought into existence in order to keep the common soldiers keyed up to their task. The more horrible a depersonalized scientific mass war becomes, the more necessary it is to find universal ideal motives to justify it. Love of Helen of Troy has become a burning love for all humanity, and hatred of the foe symbolizes a hatred of all the unrighteousness and injustice and oppression which he embodies. The more prosaic the actual causes, the more necessary is it to find glowingly sublime motives.

Such considerations hardly prove that war is to be abolished at some future date. But they destroy that argument for its necessary continuance which is based on the immutability of specified forces in original human nature. Already the forces that once caused wars have found other outlets for themselves; while new provocations, based on new economic and political conditions, have come into being. War is thus seen to be a function of social institutions, not of what is natively fixed in human constitution. The last great war has not, it must be confessed, made the problem of finding social equivalents simpler and easier. It is now naive to attribute war to specific isolable human impulses for which separate channels of expression may be found, while the rest of life is left to go on about the same. A general social re-organization is needed which will redistribute forces, immunize, divert and nullify. Hinton was doubtless right when he wrote that the only way to abolish war was to

make peace heroic. It now appears that the heroic emotions are not anything which may be specialized in a side-line, so that the war-impulses may find a sublimation in special practices and occupations. They have to get an outlet in all the tasks of peace.

The argument for the abiding necessity of war turns out, accordingly, to have this much value. It makes us wisely suspicious of all cheap and easy equivalencies. It convinces us of the folly of striving to eliminate war by agencies which leave other institutions of society pretty much unchanged. History does not prove the inevitability of war, but it does prove that customs and institutions which organize native powers into certain patterns in politics and economics will also generate the war-pattern. The problem of war is difficult because it is serious. It is none other than the wider problem of the effective moralizing or humanizing of native impulses in times of peace.

The case of economic institutions is as suggestive as that of war. The present system is indeed much more recent and more local than is the institution of war. But no system has ever as yet existed which did not in some form involve the exploitation of some human beings for the advantage of others. And it is argued that this trait is unassailable because it flows from the inherent, immutable qualities of human nature. It is argued, for example, that economic inferiorities and disabilities are incidents of an institution of private property which flows from an original proprietary instinct; it is contended they spring from a competitive struggle for wealth which in turn flows from the absolute need of profit as an inducement to industry. The pleas are worth examination for the light they throw upon the place of impulses in organized conduct.

No unprejudiced observer will lightly deny the existence of an original tendency to assimilate objects and events to the self, to make them part of "me." We may even admit that the "me" cannot exist without the "mine." The self gets solidity and form through an appropriation of things which identifies them with whatever we call myself. Even a workman in a modern factory where depersonalization is extreme gets to have "his" machine and is perturbed at a change. Possession shapes and consolidates the "I" of philosophers. "I own, therefore, I am" expresses a truer psychology than the Cartesian "I think, therefore I am." A man's deeds are imputed to him as their owner, not merely as their creator. That he cannot disown them when the moment of their occurrence passes is the root of responsibility, moral as well as legal.

But these same considerations evince the versatility of possessive activity. My worldly goods, my good name, my friends, my honor and shame all de-

pend upon a possessive tendency. The need for appropriation has had to be satisfied; but only a calloused imagination fancies that the institution of private property as it exists . . . is the sole or the indispensable means of its realization. Every gallant life is an experiment in different ways of fulfilling it. It expends itself in predatory aggression, in forming friendships, in seeking fame, in literary creation, in scientific production. In the face of this elasticity, it requires an arrogant ignorance to take the existing complex system of stocks and bonds, of wills and inheritance, a system supported at every point by manifold legal and political arrangements, and treat it as the sole legitimate and baptized child of an instinct of appropriation. Sometimes, even now, a man most accentuates the fact of ownership when he gives something away; use, consumption, is the normal end of possession. We can conceive a state of things in which the proprietary impulse would get full satisfaction by holding goods as mine in just the degree in which they were visibly administered for a benefit in which a corporate community shared.

Does the case stand otherwise with the other psychological principle appealed to, namely, the need of an incentive of personal profit to keep men engaged in useful work? We need not content ourselves with pointing out the elasticity of the idea of gain, and possible equivalences for pecuniary gain, and the possibility of a state of affairs in which only those things would be counted personal gains which profit a group. It will advance the discussion if we instead subject to analysis the whole conception of incentive and motive.

There is doubtless some sense in saying that every conscious act has an incentive or motive. But this sense is as truistic as that of the not dissimilar saying that every event has a cause. Neither statement throws any light on any particular occurrence. It is at most a maxim which advises us to search for some other fact with which the one in question may be correlated. Those who attempt to defend the necessity of existing economic institutions as manifestations of human nature convert this suggestion of a concrete inquiry into a generalized truth and hence into a definitive falsity. They take the saying to mean that nobody would do anything, or at least anything of use to others, without a prospect of some tangible reward. And beneath this false proposition there is another assumption still more monstrous, namely, that man exists naturally in a state of rest so that he requires some external force to set him into action.

The idea of a thing intrinsically wholly inert in the sense of absolutely passive is expelled from physics and has taken refuge in the psychology of current economics. In truth man acts anyway, he can't help acting. In every fundamental sense it is false that a man requires a motive to make him do

something. To a healthy man inaction is the greatest of woes. Any one who observes children knows that while periods of rest are natural, laziness is an acquired vice—or virtue. While man is awake he will do something, if only to build castles in the air. If we like the form of words we may say that a man eats only because he is “moved” by hunger. The statement is nevertheless mere tautology. For what does hunger mean except that one of the things which man does naturally, instinctively, is to search for food—that his activity naturally turns that way? Hunger primarily names an act or active process not a motive to an act. It is an act if we take it grossly, like a babe’s blind hunt for the mother’s breast; it is an activity if we take it minutely as a chemico-physiological occurrence.

The whole concept of motives is in truth extra-psychological. It is an outcome of the attempt of men to influence human action, first that of others, then of a man to influence his own behavior. No sensible person thinks of attributing the acts of an animal or an idiot to a motive. We call a biting dog ugly, but we don’t look for his motive in biting. If however we were able to direct the dog’s action by inducing him to reflect upon his acts, we should at once become interested in the dog’s motives for acting as he does, and should endeavor to get him interested in the same subject. It is absurd to ask what induces a man to activity generally speaking. He is an active being and that is all there is to be said on that score. But when we want to get him to act in this specific way rather than in that, when we want to direct his activity that is to say in a specified channel, then the question of motive is pertinent. A motive is then that element in the total complex of a man’s activity which, if it can be sufficiently stimulated, will result in an act having specified consequences. And part of the process of intensifying (or reducing) certain elements in the total activity and thus regulating actual consequence is to impute these elements to a person as his actuating motives.

A child naturally grabs food. But he does it in our presence. His manner is socially displeasing and we attribute to his act, up to this time wholly innocent, the motive of greed or selfishness. Greediness simply means the quality of his act as socially observed and disapproved. But by attributing it to him as his motive for acting in the disapproved way, we induce him to refrain. We analyze his total act and call his attention to an obnoxious element in its outcome. A child with equal spontaneity, or thoughtlessness, gives way to others. We point out to him with approval that he acted considerably, generously. And this quality of action when noted and encouraged becomes a reinforcing stimulus of that factor which will induce similar acts in the future. An



element in an act viewed as a tendency to produce such and such consequences is a motive. A motive does not exist prior to an act and produce it. It is an act *plus* a judgment upon some element of it, the judgment being made in the light of the consequences of the act.

At first, as was said, others characterize an act with favorable or condign qualities which they impute to an agent's character. They react in this fashion in order to encourage him in future acts of the same sort, or in order to dissuade him—in short to build or destroy a habit. This characterization is part of the technique of influencing the development of character and conduct. It is a refinement of the ordinary reactions of praise and blame. After a time and to some extent, a person teaches himself to think of the results of acting in this way or that before he acts. He recalls that if he acts this way or that some observer, real or imaginary, will attribute to him noble or mean disposition, virtuous or vicious motive. Thus he learns to influence his own conduct. An inchoate activity taken in this forward-looking reference to results, especially results of approbation and condemnation, constitutes a motive. Instead then of saying that a man requires a motive in order to induce him to act, we should say that when a man is going to act he needs to know *what* he is going to do—what the quality of his act is in terms of consequences to follow. In order to act properly he needs to view his act as others view it; namely, as a manifestation of a character or will which is good or bad according as it is bent upon specific things which are desirable or obnoxious. There is no call to furnish a man with incentives to activity in general. But there is every need to induce him to guide his own action by an intelligent perception of its results. For in the long run this is the most effective way of influencing activity to take this desirable direction rather than that objectionable one.

A motive in short is simply an impulse viewed as a constituent in a habit, a factor in a disposition. In general its meaning is simple. But in fact motives are as numerous as are original impulsive activities multiplied by the diversified consequences they produce as they operate under diverse conditions. How then does it come about that current economic psychology has so tremendously oversimplified the situation? Why does it recognize but one type of motive, that which concerns personal gain? Of course part of the answer is to be found in the natural tendency in all sciences toward a substitution of artificial conceptual simplifications for the tangles of concrete empirical facts. But the significant part of the answer has to do with the social conditions under which work is done, conditions which are such as to put an unnatural emphasis upon the prospect of reward. It exemplifies again our leading prop-



osition that social customs are not direct and necessary consequences of specific impulses, but that social institutions and expectations shape and crystallize impulses into dominant habits.

The social peculiarity which explains the emphasis put upon profit as an inducement to productive serviceable work stands out in high relief in the identification of work with labor. For labor means in economic theory something painful, something so onerously disagreeable or "costly" that every individual avoids it if he can, and engages in it only because of the promise of an overbalancing gain. Thus the question we are invited to consider is what the social condition is which makes productive work uninteresting and toilsome. Why is the psychology of the industrialist so different from that of inventor, explorer, artist, sportsman, scientific investigator, physician, teacher? For the latter we do not assert that activity is such a burdensome sacrifice that it is engaged in only because men are bribed to act by hope of reward or are coerced by fear of loss.

The social conditions under which "labor" is undertaken have become so uncongenial to human nature that it is not undertaken because of intrinsic meaning. It is carried on under conditions which render it immediately irksome. The alleged need of an incentive to stir men out of quiescent inertness is the need of an incentive powerful enough to overcome contrary stimuli which proceed from the social conditions. Circumstances of productive service now shear away direct satisfaction from those engaging in it. A real and important fact is thus contained in current economic psychology, but it is a fact about existing industrial conditions and not a fact about native, original activity.

It is "natural" for activity to be agreeable. It tends to find fulfillment, and finding an outlet is itself satisfactory, for it marks partial accomplishment. If productive activity has become so inherently unsatisfactory that men have to be artificially induced to engage in it, this fact is ample proof that the conditions under which work is carried on balk the complex of activities instead of promoting them, irritate and frustrate natural tendencies instead of carrying them forward to fruition. Work then becomes labor, the consequence of some aboriginal curse which forces man to do what he would not do if he could help it, the outcome of some original sin which excluded man from a paradise in which desire was satisfied without industry, compelling him to pay for the means of livelihood with the sweat of his brow. From which it follows naturally that Paradise Regained means the accumulation of investments such that a man can live upon their return without labor. There is, we repeat, too much truth in this picture. But it is not a truth concerning original

human nature and activity. It concerns the form human impulses have taken under the influence of a specific social environment. If there are difficulties in the way of social alteration—as there certainly are—they do not lie in an original aversion of human nature to serviceable action, but in the historic conditions which have differentiated the work of the laborer for wage from that of the artist, adventurer, sportsman, soldier, administrator and speculator.

## BRONISLAW MALINOWSKI

ANTHROPOLOGICAL research in the nineteenth century was dominated by the search for ultimate origins and for universal stages of development applicable to all cultures. Data from contemporary primitive peoples were taken to represent conditions which had once universally prevailed; they were viewed, that is, as institutional "fossils" persisting as living "survivals" of the past. In the first decade of the present century the orientation of anthropological theory and research suffered a remarkable reversal. As reports on primitive peoples by trained field ethnographers came to supplement the more impressionistic accounts of missionaries and travelers, specific cases proved many generalizations of the great nineteenth-century theoreticians to be partially or totally wrong. Cultural evolutionism was attacked from all sides. Attempts were made to explain widespread similarities among cultures as being diffused from common sources, rather than independently evolved; and specific culture histories were shown, in reconstruction, to be unique sequences, rather than to exhibit universal stages.

To Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942) must be accorded much of the credit for pioneering one of the important new principles that were developed in the first quarter of the present century as alternatives to cultural evolutionism. Born in Cracow, Poland, Malinowski spent the latter part of his life in England, where for fifteen years he was professor of anthropology at the University of London. Most of his field research was done among the natives of the Trobriand Islands near New Guinea. His writings include the famous *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922), *Crime and Custom in Savage Society* (1926), *The Sexual Life of Savages* (1929), and *The Dynamics of Culture Change* (1945). In this last work, from which the present selection is taken, Malinowski's conception of "functionalism" receives clear definition as an instrument for analyzing human cultures.

The rapid acceptance of the functional approach is in large measure attributable to the fact that it disposed not only of the problem of cultural origins and evolution but of culture history itself. It did this by declaring culture history to be irrelevant to the purpose of social anthropology. Thus, according to Malinowski, the origin of any trait is given by its function:

"Take our example of the fork as the instrument for the conveyance of a solid morsel from plate to mouth. It is obvious that once we define its function . . . we have . . . reached the maximum of evidence concerning its first origins. . . . [The] only intelligent hypothesis as to its origin is that the origins of the fork are the performance of the minimum task which this instrument can perform."

The functional approach led to the intensive study of a great number of discrete societies on a noncomparative basis. It became widely accepted that generalizations can satisfactorily be made once the traits and institutions of a given culture are shown to form a system of interrelated elements. Pure functional studies make little

attempt to compare these systems among themselves, beyond referring them to such basic universal categories as are discussed in the following selection. Use of these categories, which were derived by Malinowski from the biological characteristics of man himself and from the minimal requirements of his cultural and social survival, imparts to all cultures a cohesive and rational structuring and, in so doing, makes their specific variations the object of ethnographic inquiry. The necessary and sufficient conditions of a given variation, however, lie beyond the scope of the functional approach. Functionalism, viewing culture as a precise concatenation of parts, is adequate to the description of the internal dynamics of a particular culture. Given a specific variation of religious behavior, for example, it can reveal and within certain limits even predict related variants of artistic behavior. But the causes of initial variation and the universal determinants of cultural change must be searched for along other avenues of study.



## THE DYNAMICS OF CULTURE CHANGE

### *Part I*

#### CHAPTER IV: THE FUNCTIONAL THEORY OF CULTURE

... It has to be accepted as an axiom that human beings have to be nourished; that they have to reproduce; that they must be provided with shelter, personal comforts, the elements of cleanliness, and a suitable range of temperature. Anthropological theory must take its stand on biological fact. After all, human beings are an animal species. They have to conform to the elementary conditions which have to be fulfilled so that the race may continue, the individual may survive, and the organism be maintained in its working order. Healthy metabolism can only proceed in an organism which is well nourished; which has a supply of oxygen for breathing, and opportunities for muscular movement and nervous relaxation.

So far so good. But it might be maintained as is done by some sociologists, for instance Durkheim, that the subject matter of social science and that of physiology have to be kept strictly apart. This is not possible. For although human beings are animals, they are animals who live not by physiological drives alone but by physiological drives molded and modified by the conditions of culture. The food on which the Central Australian or Bushman subsists would not be acceptable to a European. In order to survive on it, his organism

---

This selection has been reprinted from Bronislaw Malinowski, *The Dynamics of Culture Change* (pp. 42-51, Copyright 1945, by Yale University Press, New Haven) by permission of the publisher.

would have to be reconditioned by a severe process of secondary training. Propagation does not take place among human beings by simple mating but within the highly complicated cultural institution of marriage. Kinship and sexual attraction are determined under conditions of culture, not by physiological drives alone but by those combined with the desire for companionship, by the need of economic cooperation, by social rank and spiritual compatibility. And this is profoundly determined by the fact that the sexual impulse does not and cannot alone lead to the production of new human beings. The procreative act has its educational, economic, legal, and moral consequences. Bodily movement does not proceed on purely instinctive lines but is organized in a great variety of human species which we call tribes, nations, and cultures, into highly complicated specific activities connected with technology, transport, games, and economic pursuits. It would be possible to show that even such processes as breathing, digestion, sleep, and exposure to sun, wind, and weather are, in the human species, never controlled by innate physiological reflexes alone but are modified by cultural determinants. Human impulses—the tastes which lead man to discriminate, the drives which move man and woman to action—are dictated by a physiology refashioned into acquired habit.

From this point of view, culture appears as a vast conditioning apparatus which, through training, the imparting of skills, the teaching of norms, and the development of tastes, amalgamates nurture with nature, and produces beings whose behavior cannot be determined by the study of anatomy and physiology alone. All this means that man, unlike the animal, never satisfies his bodily needs directly. He obtains his nourishment, not by repairing to a vast larder provided by the environment, but through a more or less roundabout process which is the economic exploitation of the environment. Even the simplest food-collecting peoples organize their root digging, their search for small animals and edible fruit; they preserve and distribute this food, prepare and consume it in organized groups. The human body, even among those people who have no clothes to speak of, is not exposed to wind, weather and sunshine directly. It is protected by a cultural carapace of windshield or house; it is warmed by a fire, screened against wind or sunshine. Again, man never deals with his difficulties alone. He organizes into families; he lives in a community with a tribal constitution, where principles of authority, of leadership, of hierarchy are defined by a cultural charter.

But technical skills as well as organization are based on one more specifically human characteristic: the development of symbolism, that is, of abstract concepts primarily embodied in language. This is, again, a capacity which



gives man a special place in animal creation closely associated with the anatomical development of his brain. Language and abstract thought are the vehicles of knowledge, of belief, of legal systems and tribal constitutions. Through the use of language, tradition and education, that is, the continuance of tradition, are made possible. The individual experience of a lifetime is transformed into the collective knowledge of mankind, at times limited, but again, as we see in our own civilization, leading man to an undreamed mastery over the environment.

We have started from the axiom that culture is an instrumental reality, an apparatus for the satisfaction of fundamental needs, that is, organic survival, environmental adaptation, and continuity in the biological sense. To this we have added the empirical corollary that, under conditions of culture, the satisfaction of organic needs is achieved in an indirect, round-about manner. Man uses tools; covers himself with clothes, and shelters himself in caves or huts, windshields or tents. He uses fire for warmth and for cooking. In this, he transforms his anatomical endowments in all his contacts with the physical milieu. He does this not alone but organized into groups. Organization means the tradition of skills, of knowledge, and of values.

Our argument thus leads us to the conclusion that the cultural satisfaction of primary biological needs imposes upon man secondary or derived imperatives. Thus, the whole body of material apparatus must be produced, maintained, distributed, used, and valued. Some economic organization, however rudimentary, is indispensable to every human society. It consists in a system of traditional rules, of technique, of property, and of the way of using and consuming objects. The functional approach to the comparative study of cultures thus postulates that the study of systems of production, distribution, and consumption must be carried out, even in the most primitive societies. It must be primarily directed toward the establishment of such concepts as property, especially property in land, division of labor, incentives, wealth, and value. Value as the main motive of organized human effort, as the principle by which human beings are made to cooperate, to produce, to maintain wealth, and to surround it with religious and sentimental beliefs, must exist even at the most primitive stages of development.

In this, we have defined the economic aspect in the comparative study of cultures. We have laid down the principle that some form or other of economic system is a universal feature of all organized human life, since it corresponds to a universal, albeit derived, imperative.

Another derived, yet universal, aspect of all cultures is the one which might be described as normative. Man achieves his mastery over the environ-

ment and his competitors through cooperation. Cooperation means life in common. Both cooperation and life in common imply sacrifices and joint effort, subordination of private interests to mutual gain—in short, the existence of rules, of authority, and of constraint. Cooperative existence in groups, however simple and small, offers temptations as regards the sex impulse, as regards the use of food and the possession of wealth, the satisfaction of ambition, and the display of power. Rank, leadership, authority, and hierarchy are social distinctions which must have existed under the earliest forms of civilization, although at such levels they may be largely associated with age, sex, and the position in the family. The functional approach to the normative problems does not allow us to be misled by the absence of formal and institutionalized types of legislation, jurisdiction, or codification. Legislation, effective sanctions, and the administration of tribal rules are often carried out as by-products of other activities.

Authority may be often vested in the head of the family, the elders of a clan, or in the leader of a magical team or a totemic group. The codification of tribal rules is embodied in those principles of mutual behavior referring to marriage and parenthood, to economic pursuits, and ritual rules. These, although perhaps not always explicitly codified, are invariably known to all the members of a society. Litigation may take the form of a more or less friendly discussion, but since law, however primitive, never can work automatically, implying as it does constraint and readjustment, there exist even in the simplest forms of culture types of debate and quarrel, mutual recrimination, and readjustment by those in authority—all of which correspond to the judicial process in more highly developed cultures. Furthermore, an analysis of norms of conduct would reveal that even in primitive communities norms can be classified into rules of law, into custom, into ethics, and into manners. Those rules which define the constitution of the family, the nature of marriage, of descent, of kinship, and of the constitution of political authority, land tenure, and property are the genuine rules of primitive law. Their knowledge is as important for the administrator as it is interesting for the theoretical student. The normative or legal aspect of the community is thus the second derived imperative of culture, and in the satisfaction of this imperative we shall have to search for the mechanisms of codification, judicial process, and sanction in every human community.

The very existence of law implies the use of constraint and authority as its ultimate sanction. In all groups there is another reason why some form of organized force must be forthcoming. This is connected with intertribal relations. Security in the tenure of tribal territory, possibilities of aggression,

and the need of collective defense constitute what might be called the derived imperative of political organization.

There is one more imperative imposed by culture upon all human groups. Since culture is the cumulative achievement of generations, there must be ways and means by which this common heritage is handed over from one generation to another. The need of such systems we may call the educational imperative. Here again, the functional approach leads us to investigate through the exact study of early life histories how the family and the group of playmates, the initiation ceremonies, and apprenticeship, how the entry into club, clan, village community, and the tribe, are accompanied by training and teaching, by the inculcation of technique, rules of craftsmanship, the principles of knowledge, social norms, and moral maxims.

These four instrumental imperatives, as we might call them—economic organization, the normative system, the organization of force, that is, the political constitution, and the mechanisms and agencies of education—do not, however, exhaust all that culture entails in imposing secondary or derived requirements on primitive and developed human groups alike. The material machinery of culture and human behavior related to it, that is, the technical skills and the rules of cooperation, are maintained, regulated, and preserved by the body of traditional lore. This is made possible by language, the instrument through which man can formulate rules of universal validity and compress them into verbal concepts. To every system of standardized technique of action there corresponds a system of knowledge. Action must be based on foresight and on the appreciation of the context, that is, the conditions under which man has to act. The results of past experience are in every community, however primitive, laid down in systems of knowledge, fixed, standardized, yet withal plastic. For man deals with nature and his fellow beings by constructive and imaginative handling of each situation as it arises. But this action by forethought is always based on the experience of previous success or failure.

Systems of human knowledge, based on true experience and on logical reasoning, exist even among the lowest primitives. They must have existed from the very moment when man handled his first tools, discovered the use of fire, and uttered the first significant sounds. The widespread misconception that primitive man had no rudiments of science; that he is nonempirical, and prelogical; that he lives in a hazy, mystical, or infantile world, can be rejected on a very elementary consideration of patent fact. No culture, however primitive, could survive unless its arts and crafts, its weapons and economic pursuits were based on sound empirical and logical knowledge. A

primitive group who would mix up science with magic or experience with mysticism could not practice fire making, the production of a sound implement, or the building of a wind shelter, if at any moment they were in danger of confusing the teachings of experience and reason with a gust of mystical phantasy. The very fact that some of the most primitive peoples known, the Australian aborigines, produce and have produced generation after generation such a highly complicated implement as the boomerang—the theory of which requires mathematical calculus to explain its construction and flight—shows how carefully and jealously a strictly scientific achievement can be maintained in a primitive culture. Thus knowledge as the capacity to distinguish empirical fact and sound reasoning, and to follow their biddings integrally, is an implication of all cultural behavior even at the most primitive stages.

— Knowledge which establishes man's final superiority over the animal world has, however, also imposed on him certain burdens. For knowledge is impossible without the formation of systems, while foresight and constructive thought are of the very essence of science. But the use of knowledge reveals to man the fundamental uncertainty and limitations of his own existence. Man, however primitive, has to think clearly. He has to look back and remember. He must also look ahead and foresee, and readapt his past experience. But although man lives reasonably, even at the early stages of his development, he does not live by reason alone. Memory and foresight, constructive thought and anticipation, refer to matters on which human welfare and the satisfaction of man's needs are intrinsically dependent. Here man's emotional reactions come into play. His very calculations and systematic thought make him subject to fear as well as to hope; to desire as well as to uncertainty. Man of all the animals does not live in the present. Culture makes it impossible for him to lead a hand-to-mouth existence, from moment to moment, in the spiritual as well as in the material sense.

— The most reasonable calculations of man have never solved for him practically or emotionally the problems connected with death, with misfortune, with natural catastrophes, such as drought and rain, earthquakes, and outbreaks of pestilence. Let us realize that the occurrences of such acts of destiny do not merely provoke reflection and thought. They force the human group to take action. The death of an individual disorganizes the group. It breaks through the plans in which he might have acted as a leader or adviser. Such an event also shatters every individual personally, in that it forces him to reflect on his own destiny and future.

When we consider the primitive systems of religion and magic, of animism



and nature worship, in conjunction with the human psychology of thwarted hope, of fears and anxieties aroused, and of calculations destroyed by an act of destiny, we see that religious belief and ritual contain an organized and standardized response. In the ritual behavior of human groups at burial and mourning, at commemorative ceremonies and sacrifices to the dead, we find first and foremost the affirmation of the belief in human immortality; the conviction that death is not real; that man has a soul, and that this perisheth not—beliefs arising out of the deep need to overcome the fear of personal destruction. This need is not due to any psychological "instinct." It is determined by the cultural factors of cooperation and by the growth of human sentiments in the family, in the comradeship of joint work, and joint responsibility. In all the facts of animism and ancestor worship, of the cult of the dead, and the communion between them and the living, we see a constructive, pragmatically valuable denial of death, and affirmation of the permanence of human values and the reality of human hopes.

Those aspects of religion in which the crises of life are sacralized, that is, made valuable, important, and legally relevant, have again an influence both on social cohesion and on the development of the individual's moral character. The mythology of religion, so intimately bound up with the social structure of a community, with its ritual, and even with its practical concerns, once more has to be considered as something which in virtue of sacred precedent determines the moral, legal, and ritual behavior of the people.

Enough has been said, however, to show that to the functionalist religion is not a cultural epiphenomenon but a profound moral and social force which gives the ultimate integration to human culture. What is usually called magic, and often dismissed as primitive and abortive science, is also a pragmatically important cultural force. A careful study of the contextual influence of magic would reveal first and foremost that magic never encroaches on the technique or subject matter of practical work. Whenever in a culture full technical control has been achieved over certain processes, magic never enters into the manipulation of such processes. Thus, for instance, magic never occurs in firemaking, in the production of stone implements, in the making of pottery, in cooking, in cleaning, or in washing. But in any type of activity where chance and uncontrollable forces are likely to upset human reckoning, magic invariably comes in. Thus in war and courtship, in pursuits dependent on rain and drought, wind and tide, we have inevitably magical beliefs and ritual. A careful and practical work reveals moreover that, psychologically, magic leads to the mental integration of the individual, by establishing the positive diathesis of optimism and confidence in success. For magic in its



essence is the conviction that, by the utterance of the appropriate spell and the performance of correct ritual gestures, man can bind and bend to his will all that is incalculable, dangerous, and adverse in the potentialities of chance. Magic, in short, is a supernatural technique by which man can, in his conceit, bring about all that which his rational technique fails to accomplish. Wherever magic is carried out on a large scale and on behalf of organized groups of people, magic also establishes leadership, enhances organization, and provides an additional factor in discipline, order, and mutual reliance.

I shall only touch briefly upon that complex, extremely important aspect of culture which concerns the creative activities of man in dancing and decorative art, in the early uses of language for art's sake, and in music. All artistic activities are, on the one side, founded on the physiology of sense-stimulation and muscular as well as nervous processes. The other functional aspect of art, as well as sport, games, and amusements, has a greater practical importance for the anthropologist. For all forms of relaxation and artistic stimulation of the nerves and muscular system are, on the one hand, a condition of healthy communal life, and on the other, fertilizing factors in cultural development and progress.

There is a theoretical aspect on which I have not yet fully insisted, and which can only be briefly indicated. It amounts to the fact that, in the study of every organized human group, it is necessary to document the results by a full inventory of the material apparatus used in its activities; it is essential to see how the group of people itself is constituted and organized; last but not least, linguistic documentation of the crucial concepts, texts, and sayings is indispensable. I would challenge anyone to adduce a single material object which could not be placed in an organized institutional system. No linguistic usage could be found for which a place in a traditional form of cooperation could not be assigned. The study of social organization remains void and suspended in the air unless we correlate it with its concrete place in the environment and lay down its legal charter in terms of Native texts.

In this argument there is thus implied yet another important concept of functional analysis: that of *Institution*, or organized system of human activities. This arises out of the principle just elaborated that the so-called elements or "traits" of a culture do not form a medley of words, implements, ideas, beliefs, customs, myths, and legal principles but are always integrated into well-defined units, for which we have chosen the name institution. We can define an institution as: a group of people united for the pursuit of a simple or complex activity; always in possession of a material endowment and a technical outfit; organized on a definite legal or customary charter,

linguistically formulated in myth, legend, rule, and maxim; and trained or prepared for the carrying out of its task.

The importance of this concept consists in that the same institutions occur throughout the whole range of human cultures. The family, that is, the group consisting of husband, wife, and their children, is universal. The tasks for which they are bound—by the charter of legal marriage—are procreation, the joint production and consumption within the household, the education and care of the children, and the carrying out of domestic duties. The charter of the family, moreover, includes the definition of the legitimacy of children, rules of descent, the apportionment of authority in the family, the division of labor, and other economic functions. The family is always associated with a type of habitation; it centers round the domestic hearth, and is endowed with family lands and other possessions.

What has just been said constitutes a universal definition of the family. Every fieldworker may well apply this definition to his particular culture and produce a concrete statement as to whether the family is based on patrilineal or matrilineal marriage; associated with the patrilocal or matrilocal principle; based on a contract validated by an economic transaction, or by an exchange of relatives, or, again, is an undertaking of reciprocal services.

In a similar way it is possible to define the extended kinship group; clan, local, or municipal community; the concept of tribe and that of nation. There exist also typical institutions of less universal occurrence. Thus in some communities we find formalized age grades, again, with their charter of seniority and admission to each class; with various functions—military, economic, ceremonial, and juridical; and with such material equipment as bachelors' and spinsters' houses, territorial spots for initiation rites, and also economic property owned conjointly by the age group.

If we were to scrutinize the way in which such aspects as economics, political organization, law or education are worked out concretely, we would find that within each of them there exist professional or occupational groups of people, carrying out a particular type of activity in an organized manner. Thus our aspect of economics describes the general phases of the process: production, exchange, and consumption. In concrete reality we would find, however, that production may consist of agriculture, cattle herding, or industry. Agriculture at times is carried on on the basis of the family, in which case this institution is also the productive agricultural unit. More frequently we find that the tilling of the soil mobilizes a special team of people, under the leadership of the chief, the local headman or perhaps the man who carries out garden magic. Such a team again is an institution in that it works under

the charter of land tenure; of exchange of services; and the apportionment of the crops, including tribute to chief, headman, or magician. The group who jointly till the soil are also the owners of the territory, which may be individually held under joint control. In the administration of justice, we may have, as already elaborated, a more or less crystallized system of guardians and wielders of customary law, or else the knowledge of the rules and their administration may fall within the purview of groups organized on other principles. Disputes about land or produce are usually settled within the agricultural team, the leader and his assistant acting as the impartial authority. Domestic quarrels seldom go beyond the authority of the patriarch or matriarch within the household.

Exactly as the analysis into aspects shows that the types of human activity can be classified into several categories, each comparable with its counterpart in other cultures, and each definable in terms of structure and process, so any attempt at synthesizing, at placing an object, custom, or idea, within its natural setting, brings us to an institution, that is, to an organized, purposeful system of human effort and achievement.

## LAWRENCE K. FRANK

THE following brief selection by Lawrence K. Frank is concerned—as is the functionalism of Malinowski—with exploring the relations between the organic characteristics of *homo sapiens* and his culture. Malinowski, however, confronts us with the overview of a culture and with the mesh and interplay of its institutions, tending to emphasize culture as product rather than as determinant. Frank, on the other hand, takes a pre-existing culture as given and asks us to observe how and to what limits its norms are “built into” a child—the single physiological specimen—which newly enters into it.

Lawrence Kelso Frank was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1890 and was graduated from Columbia College in 1912. Active as a teacher, scholar, and writer, he has centered his interests in the field of social psychology. His books include *Projective Methods* (1948), *Society as the Patient* (1949), and *Nature and Human Nature* (1951).



### CULTURAL CONTROL AND PHYSIOLOGICAL AUTONOMY

If we start with the newborn infant, we see an organism that has, in varying degree, well-organized physiological processes, of which, for our present discussion, we may distinguish three: (1) the physiological process concerned with metabolism that operates to reduce blood sugar, generate gastric contractions and the resultant tension and discomfort we call “hunger”; (2) the accumulation of urine and feces in hollow viscera where increasing pressure serves to release the sphincters and thereby permit evacuation; (3) the extraordinarily well-developed capacity for organic response to what we call “emotional stimuli” that evoke the physiological disturbances of anger or rage and fear.

The processes through which the child surrenders his physiological autonomy and accepts the cultural control is a very concrete series of operations performed by the cultural agent, mother or nurse, who persuades, cajoles, coerces, or otherwise treats the child so that the following modifications take place:

---

This selection has been reprinted from Lawrence K. Frank, “Cultural Control and Physiological Autonomy,” *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, Vol. VIII (1938), pp. 622–626, by permission of the publisher.



1. The infant learns to regularize the reduction of blood sugar so that he can tolerate progressively longer intervals between the intake of food and gradually learns to accept for nourishment those foodstuffs which are favored by his culture as appropriate and desirable. This process may be described as the transformation of hunger into appetite, whereby the child becomes progressively more dependent upon the external situation to arouse the desire for specific foodstuffs as contrasted with the more elementary development of hunger as a function of intra-organic processes. In order to simplify this discussion, no extended description will be given to the weaning process whereby the child is forced to surrender the intimacy of bodily contact with the mother and the satisfaction of the need of sucking, and learns to substitute auditory stimuli of approval and praise for the tactual stimuli through which he has been obtaining his basic security and emotional equilibrium.

2. The infant learns through the process of toilet training two important physiological adjustments: (a) to recognize the accumulation of pressures in the bladder and rectum as warning signals or cues for inhibition of the automatic sphincter release and for activity such as calling for assistance or going to the designated vessel or place where sphincter release is permitted; (b) to learn to evacuate urine or feces not merely when physiologically needed but when demanded, i.e., when an evacuation is required by the mother or nurse. Through these readjustments, the physiological processes of elimination are transformed from purely physiological events to cultural events in the sense that their occurrence now becomes dependent upon external situations and cultural requirements rather than intra-organic functional needs. This process illustrates the meaning of the statement that the infant surrenders his physiological autonomy to cultural control.

3. The infant learns under parental supervision what situations offer permissible opportunities for emotional reactions and to what extent so that the primitive, elemental physiological response that we call "emotion" becomes patterned in accordance with the approved forms of expression and repression favored by the culture.

The significance of these three readjustments may be described in terms of the processes whereby culture is literally built into the organism as a series of definite physiological adjustments in various primitive organic functions. These physiological adjustments may be regarded as a process of transformation of behavior into conduct in the sense that the child ceases to behave reflexly and instinctively, as he learns the required conduct toward the culturally defined situations upon which he becomes progressively dependent for functional activity and direction to his life.

If time permitted, it would be desirable to examine also the processes whereby the child learns to respect the inviolabilities that we call "private property" and "sanctity of the person," through a process of having his naïve behavior response to things and people blocked or prohibited by the parents or cultural agent until the child learns to tolerate exposure to the biologically adequate stimulus of forbidden things and persons without responding thereto. Attention should also be given to the other transformations in behavior whereby the child learns to perform certain formal actions in designated situations (manners, etiquette, roles, rituals, etc.) as compelled responses to those situations, *as culturally defined*. The important point to note here is that there is nothing in the biological, physical, chemical, or otherwise objectively described situation that gives any clue to or reason for the conduct of avoidance of inviolabilities or the performance of compelled formal actions. These learned actions are developed in the child only because a cultural agent has defined situations in such a fashion and with such coercion that the child must learn to respond thereto in the prescribed cultural pattern of avoidance or performance. Again we may see how culture is built into the organism in the sense that the individual child learns to respond to the culturally defined situation in the prescribed patterns, and develops a differential sensitivity to the psychological potency of the culture situation. The definition of situations is made by a cultural agent, who thereby invests situations with authority which thereafter operates to direct the child's conduct.

What we see, therefore, is that culture is not some mysterious entity or mystic force floating around in the universe; culture approached operationally is the sum total of the ways people pattern their functions and behavior into conduct and more specifically transmit those patterns to their children. Culture, then, is a process, an activity, not an entity or a thing. It is to be studied as operating within human organisms where it has been established in their very organic structure, functioning, and behavior. This statement, of course, does not rule out or ignore the existence of an enormous body of tools and techniques and of words and symbols, such as written documents, etc., in and through which learned conduct is carried out and the continuity of culture is provided, because those tools and those symbols are used by the cultural agent in orienting his behavior and in enforcing cultural patterns upon the young.

While there may be a fairly high degree of uniformity in the officially approved cultural patterns that parents are supposed to transmit to their children, nevertheless the way in which these cultural lessons are taught to the child is exceedingly diverse, with varying degrees of emphasis, of coercion,

and rigidity. Thus each individual child receives a highly idiomatic or idiosyncratic version of the official culture which, imposed upon his unique hereditary constitution and disposition, gives rise to what we call "personality." But this conception of personality is inadequate if it does not also recognize that the individual organism, while undergoing this cultural patterning, with all of its variations and peculiarities of the family situation, also develops, along with each of these cultural patterns, a persistent affective reaction to the world of people and things around him to which he must make these required responses. This brings us, then, to a realization that the individual is engaged not only in the overt conduct demanded by the culture, but he is also feeling, at each moment, acceptance or rejection of the cultural world in which he lives, acquiescence or resistance to its demands, and other affective disturbances as he is forced to accept deprivations, repressions, or finds indulgences or releases.

If we are, therefore, to clarify our thinking and focus our investigation on the problem of culture and personality we may perhaps gain both clarification and precision by recognizing that what we call "culture" is more or less an abstraction for the total aggregate of patterned conduct within a given culture area wherein we may distinguish certain persistent uniformities of pattern. Personality emerges, then, as the unique individual organic manifestation of that culture as seen in an individual who, as a member of that group, utilizes the prescribed cultural patterns, but always idiomatically and with affective reactions that are peculiarly his own.

From studies of personality and of cultures it appears that man *exists* as an organism in a common public world of animals, plants, structures, and other physical objects and processes, but each individual *lives* in his private world of meanings and feelings, derived from the impact of culture that takes place in the specific personal relations between cultural agents and the child. Different cultures tolerate varying degrees of deviation from the socially sanctioned patterns of conduct. In our culture when the individual's private world deviates too far from the official culture we speak of mental disorders; when the individual's overt conduct transgresses the culturally defined inviolabilities, or conflicts with the cultural requirements, we speak of delinquency and criminality.

It may be useful to think of each individual as living in his "life space" which is his individualized way of ordering experience, as contrasted with the more generalized ways of ordering experience called science or art or religion. We need to free ourselves from a great many obsolete conceptions

and to realize that it is largely a question of the focus of our interest whether we are concerned with questions of uniformity, inter-relationships, and regularity such as we see in culture, or with questions of individual variations and diversification of the unique configurations of patterns that we find in the human personality.





# MAN, MIND, AND CULTURE

## 2. THE HUMAN ASPECT OF THE HUMAN ANIMAL



## ERNST CASSIRER

ERNST CASSIRER, generally acknowledged as one of the most versatile and original thinkers of the twentieth century, was born in Breslau, Germany, in 1874. As a young man he became affiliated with the school of neo-Kantians at the University of Marburg, and his most important writings take as their point of departure the difficulty, explored by Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), of basing ultimate truths upon the data yielded by man's senses. From this problem Cassirer was led into a study of the diversity of the symbolic systems which the human imagination creates in its effort to understand and penetrate the essence of reality. To the task he brought a familiarity with anthropology, sociology, linguistics, and natural science, as well as a fertile historical insight. His life was a "long Odyssey . . . from one University to another"; after his exile from Nazi Germany in 1932 he went to England, then Sweden, and finally the United States, where he died in 1945 while teaching at Columbia University. His principal works—*The Problem of Knowledge* (1906), *Substance and Function* (1910), and *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* (1923-29)—exhibit the serenity and timelessness that one associates with the free philosophic spirit. *An Essay on Man* (1944), from which the following selection is taken, is a résumé of his main conclusions.

Cassirer's definition of man as a symbol-using animal—and his distinction between animal reactions and human responses—is fruitful for a study of man in society. For this definition crumbles the barriers which often arise between the social and natural sciences on one hand and, on the other, between social sciences and a philosophic or humanistic outlook. Cassirer draws upon all three of these orientations; none is for him an exclusive one, and all are mutually illuminating. Cassirer points out that man, while remaining a creature of biological needs and limits, removes himself from the realm of animal behavior by construing his world in terms of symbols which may be independently manipulated, and which even become subject to their own laws of composition. In so doing man veils his world with imaginative forms that express his own emotions and creative longings. Symbol-making man recreates his own soul, shaping his reason and imbuing it with a wealth of content. Man's enduring pleasures are in contemplating and communicating, in refashioning and integrating his symbolic forms. Each symbolic system is relatively autonomous, with its private principles and area of reference, but all of them are born of the same mentality and spiritual impetus. Thus Cassirer writes: "Myth, religion, art, language, even science, are now looked upon as so many variations on a common theme—and it is the task of philosophy to make this theme audible and understandable."

This conception of the nature of symbols and the ultimate unity of all symbolic forms as expressive of the spiritual strivings of man suggests analogies to a variety of contemporary movements upon which, indeed, Cassirer drew in illustrating his argument. The belief of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) that the creative life of man is to be understood in terms of unconscious impulses symbolized in dream and



fantasy offers important parallels. The conviction of the Gestalt psychologists that man perceives not fragmentary sense data but already integrated wholes provides another instance. Finally, the anthropologists' conception of the interrelatedness of all ranges of human activity in culture expresses a particular form of the principles which Cassirer renders in their most generalized and philosophic shape.



## AN ESSAY ON MAN

### *Part I: What Is Man?*

#### CHAPTER II: A CLUE TO THE NATURE OF MAN: THE SYMBOL

The biologist Johannes von Uexküll has written a book in which he undertakes a critical revision of the principles of biology. Biology, according to Uexküll, is a natural science which has to be developed by the usual empirical methods—the methods of observation and experimentation. Biological thought, on the other hand, does not belong to the same type as physical or chemical thought. Uexküll is a resolute champion of vitalism; he is a defender of the principle of the autonomy of life. Life is an ultimate and self-dependent reality. It cannot be described or explained in terms of physics or chemistry. . . . As he points out, it would be a very naive sort of dogmatism to assume that there exists an absolute reality of things which is the same for all living beings. Reality is not a unique and homogeneous thing; it is immensely diversified, having as many different schemes and patterns as there are different organisms. Every organism is, so to speak, a monadic being. It has a world of its own because it has an experience of its own. The phenomena that we find in the life of a certain biological species are not transferable to any other species. The experiences—and therefore the realities—of two different organisms are incommensurable with one another. In the world of a fly, says Uexküll, we find only “fly things”; in the world of a sea urchin we find only “sea urchin things.”

From this general presupposition Uexküll develops a very ingenious and original scheme of the biological world. Wishing to avoid all psychological interpretations, he follows an entirely objective or behavioristic method. The only clue to animal life, he maintains, is given us in the facts of comparative anatomy. If we know the anatomical structure of an animal species, we

---

This selection has been reprinted from Ernst Cassirer, *An Essay on Man* (pp. 23–41, Copyright 1944, by Yale University Press, New Haven) by permission of the publisher.

possess all the necessary data for reconstructing its special mode of experience. A careful study of the structure of the animal body, of the number, the quality, and the distribution of the various sense organs, and the conditions of the nervous system, gives us a perfect image of the inner and outer world of the organism. Uexküll began his investigations with a study of the lowest organisms; he extended them gradually to all the forms of organic life. In a certain sense he refuses to speak of lower or higher forms of life. Life is perfect everywhere; it is the same in the smallest as in the largest circle. Every organism, even the lowest, is not only in a vague sense adapted to . . . but entirely fitted into . . . its environment. According to its anatomical structure it possesses a certain *Merksnetz* and a certain *Wirknetz*—a receptor system and an effector system. Without the cooperation and equilibrium of these two systems the organism could not survive. The receptor system by which a biological species receives outward stimuli and the effector system by which it reacts to them are in all cases closely interwoven. They are links in one and the same chain which is described by Uexküll as the *functional circle* . . . of the animal.

I cannot enter here upon a discussion of Uexküll's biological principles. I have merely referred to his concepts and terminology in order to pose a general question. Is it possible to make use of the scheme proposed by Uexküll for a description and characterization of the *human world*? Obviously this world forms no exception to those biological rules which govern the life of all the other organisms. Yet in the human world we find a new characteristic which appears to be the distinctive mark of human life. The functional circle of man is not only quantitatively enlarged; it has also undergone a qualitative change. Man has, as it were, discovered a new method of adapting himself to his environment. Between the receptor system and the effector system, which are to be found in all animal species, we find in man a third link which we may describe as the *symbolic system*. This new acquisition transforms the whole of human life. As compared with the other animals man lives not merely in a broader reality; he lives, so to speak, in a new *dimension* of reality. There is an unmistakable difference between organic reactions and human responses. In the first case a direct and immediate answer is given to an outward stimulus; in the second case the answer is delayed. It is interrupted and retarded by a slow and complicated process of thought. At first sight such a delay may appear to be a very questionable gain. Many philosophers have warned man against this pretended progress. "L'homme qui médite," says Rousseau, "est un animal dépravé"<sup>1</sup>: it is not an improvement

<sup>1</sup> [*The man who meditates is a perverted animal.*]

but a deterioration of human nature to exceed the boundaries of organic life.

Yet there is no remedy against this reversal of the natural order. Man cannot escape from his own achievement. He cannot but adopt the conditions of his own life. No longer in a merely physical universe, man lives in a symbolic universe. Language, myth, art, and religion are parts of this universe. They are the varied threads which weave the symbolic net, the tangled web of human experience. All human progress in thought and experience refines upon and strengthens this net. No longer can man confront reality immediately; he cannot see it, as it were, face to face. Physical reality seems to recede in proportion as man's symbolic activity advances. Instead of dealing with the things themselves man is in a sense constantly conversing with himself. He has so enveloped himself in linguistic forms, in artistic images, in mythical symbols or religious rites that he cannot see or know anything except by the interposition of this artificial medium. His situation is the same in the theoretical as in the practical sphere. Even here man does not live in a world of hard facts, or according to his immediate needs and desires. He lives rather in the midst of imaginary emotions, in hopes and fears, in illusions and disillusions, in his fantasies and dreams. "What disturbs and alarms man," said Epictetus, "are not the things, but his opinions and fancies about the things."

From the point of view at which we have just arrived we may correct and enlarge the classical definition of man. In spite of all the efforts of modern irrationalism this definition of man as an *animal rationale* has not lost its force. Rationality is indeed an inherent feature of all human activities. Mythology itself is not simply a crude mass of superstitions or gross delusions. It is not merely chaotic, for it possesses a systematic or conceptual form. But, on the other hand, it would be impossible to characterize the structure of myth as rational. Language has often been identified with reason, or with the very source of reason. But it is easy to see that this definition fails to cover the whole field . . . ; it offers us a part for the whole. For side by side with conceptual language there is an emotional language; side by side with logical or scientific language there is a language of poetic imagination. Primarily language does not express thoughts or ideas, but feelings and affections. And even a religion "within the limits of pure reason" as conceived and worked out by Kant is no more than a mere abstraction. It conveys only the ideal shape, only the shadow, of what a genuine and concrete religious life is. The great thinkers who have defined man as an *animal rationale* were not empiricists, nor did they ever intend to give an empirical account of human nature. By this definition they were expressing rather a fundamental moral

imperative. Reason is a very inadequate term with which to comprehend the forms of man's cultural life in all their richness and variety. But all these forms are symbolic forms. Hence, instead of defining man as an *animal rationale*, we should define him as an *animal symbolicum*. By so doing we can designate his specific difference, and we can understand the new way open to man—the way to civilization.

### CHAPTER III: FROM ANIMAL REACTIONS TO HUMAN RESPONSES

By our definition of man as an *animal symbolicum* we have arrived at our first point of departure for further investigations. But it now becomes imperative that we develop this definition somewhat in order to give it greater precision. That symbolic thought and symbolic behavior are among the most characteristic features of human life, and that the whole progress of human culture is based on these conditions, is undeniable. But are we entitled to consider them as the special endowment of man to the exclusion of all other organic beings? Is not symbolism a principle which we may trace back to a much deeper source, and which has a much broader range of applicability? If we answer this question in the negative we must, as it seems, confess our ignorance concerning many fundamental questions which have perennially occupied the center of attention in the philosophy of human culture. The question of the *origin* of language, of art, of religion becomes unanswerable, and we are left with human culture as a given fact which remains in a sense isolated and, therefore, unintelligible.

It is understandable that scientists have always refused to accept such a solution. They have made great efforts to connect the fact of symbolism with other well-known and more elementary facts. The problem has been felt to be of paramount importance, but unfortunately it has very rarely been approached with an entirely open mind. From the first it has been obscured and confused by other questions which belong to a quite different realm of discourse. Instead of giving us an unbiased description and analysis of the phenomena themselves the discussion of this problem has been converted into a metaphysical dispute. It has become the bone of contention between the different metaphysical systems: between idealism and materialism, spiritualism and naturalism. For all these systems the question of symbolism has become a crucial problem, on which the future shape of science and metaphysics has seemed to hinge.

With this aspect of the problem we are not concerned here, having set for ourselves a much more modest and concrete task. We shall attempt to describe the symbolic attitude of man in a more accurate manner in order to be



able to contradistinguish it from other modes of symbolic behavior found throughout the animal kingdom. That animals do not always react to stimuli in a direct way, that they are capable of an indirect reaction, is evidently beyond question. The well-known experiments of Pavlov provide us with a rich body of empirical evidence concerning the so-called representative stimuli. In the case of the anthropoid apes a very interesting experimental study by Wolfe has shown the effectiveness of "token rewards." The animals learned to respond to tokens as substitute for food rewards in the same way in which they responded to food itself. According to Wolfe the results of varied and protracted training experiments have demonstrated that symbolic processes occur in the behavior of anthropoid apes. Robert M. Yerkes, who describes these experiments in his latest book, draws from them an important general conclusion.

That they [symbolic processes] are relatively rare and difficult to observe is evident. One may fairly continue to question their existence, but I suspect that they presently will be identified as antecedents of human symbolic processes. Thus we leave this subject at a most exciting stage of development, when discoveries of moment seem imminent.

It would be premature to make any predictions with regard to the future development of this problem. The field must be left open for future investigations. The interpretation of the experimental facts, on the other hand, always depends on certain fundamental concepts which have to be clarified before the empirical material can bear its fruit. Modern psychology and psychobiology take this fact into account. It seems to me highly significant that nowadays it is not the philosophers but the empirical observers and investigators who appear to be taking the leading roles in solving this problem. The latter tell us that after all the problem is not merely an empirical one but to a great degree a logical one. Georg Révész has recently published a series of articles in which he starts off with the proposition that the warmly debated question of so-called *animal language* cannot be solved on the basis of mere facts of animal psychology. Everyone who examines the different psychological theses and theories with an unbiased and critical mind must come at last to the conclusion that the problem cannot be cleared up by simply referring to forms of animal communication and to certain animal accomplishments which are gained by drill and training. All such accomplishments admit of the most contradictory interpretations. Hence it is necessary, first of all, to find a correct logical starting point, one which can lead us to a natural and sound interpretation of the empirical facts. This starting point is the *definition of speech*. . . . But instead of giving a ready-made definition

of speech, it would be better perhaps to proceed along tentative lines. Speech is not a simple and uniform phenomenon. It consists of different elements which, both biologically and systematically, are not on the same level. We must try to find the order and interrelationships of the constituent elements; we must, as it were, distinguish the various geological strata of speech. The first and most fundamental stratum is evidently the language of the emotions. A great portion of all human utterance still belongs to this stratum. But there is a form of speech that shows us quite a different type. Here the word is by no means a mere interjection; it is not an involuntary expression of feeling, but a part of a sentence which has a definite syntactical and logical structure. It is true that even in highly developed, in theoretical language the connection with the first element is not entirely broken off. Scarcely a sentence can be found—except perhaps the pure formal sentences of mathematics—without a certain affective or emotional tinge. Analogies and parallels to emotional language may be found in abundance in the animal world. As regards chimpanzees Wolfgang Koehler states that they achieve a considerable degree of expression by means of gesture. Rage, terror, despair, grief, pleading, desire, playfulness, and pleasure are readily expressed in this manner. Nevertheless one element, which is characteristic of and indispensable to all human language, is missing: we find no signs which have an objective reference or meaning. "It may be taken as positively proved," says Koehler,

that their gamut of *phonetics* is entirely "subjective," and can only express emotions, never designate or describe objects. But they have so many phonetic elements which are also common to human languages, that their lack of articulate speech cannot be ascribed to *secondary* (glosso-labial) limitations. Their gestures too, of face and body like their expression in sound, never designate or "describe" objects (Bühler).

Here we touch upon the crucial point in our whole problem. The difference between *propositional language* and *emotional language* is the real landmark between the human and the animal world. All the theories and observations concerning animal language are wide of the mark if they fail to recognize this fundamental difference. In all the literature of the subject there does not seem to be a single conclusive proof of the fact that any animal ever made the decisive step from subjective to objective, from affective to propositional language. Koehler insists emphatically that speech is definitely beyond the power of anthropoid apes. He maintains that the lack of this invaluable technical aid and the great limitation of those very important components of thought, the so-called images, constitute the causes which prevent animals from ever achieving even the least beginnings of cultural development. The same conclusion has been reached by Révész. Speech, he asserts, is an anthro-

pological concept which accordingly should be entirely discarded from the study of animal psychology. If we proceed from a clear and precise definition of speech, all the other forms of utterances, which we also find in animals, are automatically eliminated. Yerkes, who has studied the problem with special interest, speaks in a more positive tone. He is convinced that even with respect to language and symbolism there exists a close relationship between man and the anthropoid apes. "This suggests," he writes, "that we may have happened upon an early phylogenetic stage in the evolution of symbolic process. There is abundant evidence that various other types of sign process than the symbolic are of frequent occurrence and function effectively in the chimpanzee." Yet all this remains definitely prelinguistic. Even in the judgment of Yerkes all these functional expressions are exceedingly rudimentary, simple, and of limited usefulness by comparison with human cognitive processes. The genetic question is not to be confused here with the analytical and phenomenological question. The logical analysis of human speech always leads us to an element of prime importance which has no parallel in the animal world. The general theory of evolution in no sense stands in the way of the acknowledgment of this fact. Even in the field of the phenomena of organic nature we have learned that evolution does not exclude a sort of original creation. The fact of sudden mutation and of emergent evolution has to be admitted. Modern biology no longer speaks of evolution in terms of earlier Darwinism; nor does it explain the causes of evolution in the same way. We may readily admit that the anthropoid apes, in the development of certain symbolic processes, have made a significant forward step. But again we must insist that they did not reach the threshold of the human world. They entered, as it were, a blind alley.

For the sake of a clear statement of the problem we must carefully distinguish between *signs* and *symbols*. That we find rather complex systems of signs and signals in animal behavior seems to be an ascertained fact. We may even say that some animals, especially domesticated animals, are extremely susceptible to signs.<sup>2</sup> A dog will react to the slightest changes in the behavior of his master; he will even distinguish the expressions of a human

<sup>2</sup> This susceptibility has, for instance, been proved in the famous case of "clever Hans" which a few decades ago created something of a sensation among psychobiologists. Clever Hans was a horse which appeared to possess an astounding intelligence. He could even master rather complicated arithmetical problems, extract cube roots, and so on, stamping on the ground as many times as the solution of the problem required. A special committee of psychologists and other scientists was called on to investigate the case. It soon became clear that the animal reacted to certain involuntary movements of its owner. When the owner was absent or did not understand the question, the horse could not answer it.

face or the modulations of a human voice.<sup>3</sup> But it is a far cry from these phenomena to an understanding of symbolic and human speech. The famous experiments of Pavlov prove only that animals can easily be trained to react not merely to direct stimuli but to all sorts of mediate or representative stimuli. A bell, for example, may become a "sign for dinner," and an animal may be trained not to touch its food when this sign is absent. But from this we learn only that the experimenter, in this case, has succeeded in changing the food-situation of the animal. He has complicated this situation by voluntarily introducing into it a new element. All the phenomena which are commonly described as conditioned reflexes are not merely very far from but even opposed to the essential character of human symbolic thought. Symbols—in the proper sense of this term—cannot be reduced to mere signals. Signals and symbols belong to two different universes of discourse: a signal is a part of the physical world of being; a symbol is a part of the human world of meaning. Signals are "operators"; symbols are "designators." Signals, even when understood and used as such, have nevertheless a sort of physical or substantial being; symbols have only a functional value.

Bearing this distinction in mind, we can find an approach to one of the most controverted problems. The question of the *intelligence of animals* has always been one of the greatest puzzles of anthropological philosophy. Tremendous efforts, both of thought and observation, have been expended on answers to this question. But the ambiguity and vagueness of the very term "intelligence" has always stood in the way of a clear solution. How can we hope to answer a question whose import we do not understand? Metaphysicians and scientists, naturalists and theologians have used the word intelligence in varying and contradictory senses. Some psychologists and psychobiologists have flatly refused to speak of the intelligence of animals. In all animal behavior they saw only the play of a certain automatism. This

<sup>3</sup> To illustrate this point I should like to mention another very revealing example. The psychobiologist, Dr. Pfungst, who had developed some new and interesting methods for the study of animal behavior, once told me that he had received a letter from a major about a curious problem. The major had a dog which accompanied him on his walks. Whenever the master got ready to go out the animal showed signs of great joy and excitement. But one day the major decided to try a little experiment. Pretending to go out, he put on his hat, took his cane, and made the customary preparations—without, however, any intention of going for a walk. To his great surprise the dog was not in the least deceived; he remained quietly in his corner. After a brief period of observation Dr. Pfungst was able to solve the mystery. In the major's room there was a desk with a drawer which contained some valuable and important documents. The major had formed the habit of rattling this drawer before leaving the house in order to make sure that it was safely locked. He did not do so the day he did not intend to go out. But for the dog this had become a signal, a necessary element of the walk-situation. Without this signal the dog did not react.



thesis had behind it the authority of Descartes; yet it has been reasserted in modern psychology. "The animal," says E. L. Thorndike in his work on animal intelligence,

does not think one is like the other, nor does it, as is so often said, mistake one for the other. It does not think *about* it at all; it just thinks *it*. . . . The idea that animals react to a particular and absolutely defined and realized sense-impression, and that a similar reaction to a sense-impression which varies from the first proves an association by similarity, is a myth.

Later and more exact observations led to a different conclusion. In the case of the higher animals it became clear that they were able to solve rather difficult problems and that these solutions were not brought about in a merely mechanical way, by trial and error. As Koehler points out, the most striking difference exists between a mere chance solution and a genuine solution, so that the one can easily be distinguished from the other. That at least some of the reactions of the higher animals are not merely a product of chance but guided by insight appears to be incontestable. If by intelligence we understand either adjustment to the immediate environment or adaptive modification of environment, we must certainly ascribe to animals a comparatively highly developed intelligence. It must also be conceded that not all animal actions are governed by the presence of an immediate stimulus. The animal is capable of all sorts of detours in its reactions. It may learn not only to use implements but even to invent tools for its purposes. Hence some psychobiologists do not hesitate to speak of a creative or constructive imagination in animals. But neither this intelligence nor this imagination is of the specifically human type. In short, we may say that the animal possesses a practical imagination and intelligence whereas man alone has developed a new form: a *symbolic imagination and intelligence*.

Moreover, in the mental development of the individual mind the transition from one form to the other—from a merely practical attitude to a symbolic attitude—is evident. But here this step is the final result of a slow and continuous process. By the usual methods of psychological observation it is not easy to distinguish the individual stages of this complicated process. There is, however, another way to obtain full insight into the general character and paramount importance of this transition. Nature itself has here, so to speak, made an experiment capable of throwing unexpected light upon the point in question. We have the classical cases of Laura Bridgman and Helen Keller, two blind deaf-mute children, who by means of special methods learned to speak. Although both cases are well known and have often been treated in psychological literature, I must nevertheless remind the reader



of them once more because they contain perhaps the best illustration of the general problem with which we are here concerned. Mrs. Sullivan, the teacher of Helen Keller, has recorded the exact date on which the child really began to understand the meaning and function of human language. I quote her own words:

I must write you a line this morning because something very important has happened. Helen has taken the second great step in her education. She has learned that *everything has a name, and that the manual alphabet is the key to everything she wants to know*.

. . . This morning, while she was washing, she wanted to know the name for "water." When she wants to know the name of anything, she points to it and pats my hand. I spelled "w-a-t-e-r" and thought no more about it until after breakfast. . . . [Later on] we went out to the pump house, and I made Helen hold her mug under the spout while I pumped. As the cold water gushed forth, filling the mug, I spelled "w-a-t-e-r" in Helen's free hand. The word coming so close upon the sensation of cold water rushing over her hand seemed to startle her. She dropped the mug and stood as one transfixed. A new light came into her face. She spelled "water" several times. Then she dropped on the ground and asked for its name and pointed to the pump and the trellis and suddenly turning round she asked for my name. I spelled "teacher." All the way back to the house she was highly excited, and learned the name of every object she touched, so that in a few hours she had added thirty new words to her vocabulary. The next morning she got up like a radiant fairy. She has flitted from object to object, asking the name of everything and kissing me for very gladness. . . . Everything must have a name now. Wherever we go, she asks eagerly for the names of things she has not learned at home. She is anxious for her friends to spell, and eager to teach the letters to everyone she meets. She drops the signs and pantomime she used before, as soon as she has words to supply their place, and the acquirement of a new word affords her the liveliest pleasure. And we notice that her face grows more expressive each day.

The decisive step leading from the use of signs and pantomime to the use of words, that is, of symbols, could scarcely be described in a more striking manner. What was the child's real discovery at this moment? Helen Keller had previously learned to combine a certain thing or event with a certain sign of the manual alphabet. A fixed association had been established between these things and certain tactile impressions. But a series of such associations, even if they are repeated and amplified, still does not imply an understanding of what human speech is and means. In order to arrive at such an understanding the child had to make a new and much more significant discovery. It had to understand that *everything has a name*—that the symbolic function is not restricted to particular cases but is a principle of *universal* applicability which encompasses the whole field of human thought. In the case of Helen Keller this discovery came as a sudden shock. She was a

girl seven years of age who, with the exception of defects in the use of certain sense organs, was in an excellent state of health and possessed of a highly developed mind. By the neglect of her education she had been very much retarded. Then, suddenly, the crucial development takes place. It works like an intellectual revolution. The child begins to see the world in a new light. It has learned the use of words not merely as mechanical signs or signals but as an entirely new instrument of thought. A new horizon is opened up, and henceforth the child will roam at will in this incomparably wider and freer area.

The same can be shown in the case of Laura Bridgman, though hers is a less spectacular story. Both in mental ability and in intellectual development Laura Bridgman was greatly inferior to Helen Keller. Her life and education do not contain the same dramatic elements we find in Helen Keller. Yet in both cases the same typical elements are present. After Laura Bridgman had learned the use of the finger-alphabet she, too, suddenly reached the point at which she began to understand the symbolism of human speech. In this respect we find a surprising parallelism between the two cases. "I shall never forget," writes Miss Drew, one of the first teachers of Laura Bridgman, "the first meal taken after she appreciated the use of the finger-alphabet. Every article that she touched must have a name; and I was obliged to call some one to help me wait upon the other children, while she kept me busy in spelling the new words."

The principle of symbolism, with its universality, validity, and general applicability, is the magic word, the Open Sesame! giving access to the specifically human world, to the world of human culture. Once man is in possession of this magic key further progress is assured. Such progress is evidently not obstructed or made impossible by any lack in the sense material. The case of Helen Keller, who reached a very high degree of mental development and intellectual culture, shows us clearly and irrefutably that a human being in the construction of his human world is not dependent upon the quality of his sense material. If the theories of sensationalism were right, if every idea were nothing but a faint copy of an original sense impression, then the condition of a blind, deaf, and dumb child would indeed be desperate. For it would be deprived of the very sources of human knowledge; it would be, as it were, an exile from reality. But if we study Helen Keller's autobiography we are at once aware that this is untrue, and at the same time we understand why it is untrue. Human culture derives its specific character and its intellectual and moral values, not from the material of which it consists, but from its form, its architectural structure. And this form may be ex-

pressed in any sense material. Vocal language has a very great technical advantage over tactile language; but the technical defects of the latter do not destroy its essential use. The free development of symbolic thought and symbolic expression is not obstructed by the use of tactile signs in the place of vocal ones. If the child has succeeded in grasping the meaning of human language, it does not matter in which particular material this meaning is accessible to it. As the case of Helen Keller proves, man can construct his symbolic world out of the poorest and scantiest materials. The thing of vital importance is not the individual bricks and stones but their general *function* as architectural form. In the realm of speech it is their general symbolic function which vivifies the material signs and "makes them speak." Without this vivifying principle the human world would indeed remain deaf and mute. With this principle, even the world of a deaf, dumb, and blind child can become incomparably broader and richer than the world of the most highly developed animal.

Universal applicability, owing to the fact that everything has a name, is one of the greatest prerogatives of human symbolism. But it is not the only one. There is still another characteristic of symbols which accompanies and complements this one, and forms its necessary correlate. A symbol is not only universal but extremely variable. I can express the same meaning in various languages; and even within the limits of a single language a certain thought or idea may be expressed in quite different terms. A sign or signal is related to the thing to which it refers in a fixed and unique way. Any one concrete and individual sign refers to a certain individual thing. In Pavlov's experiments the dogs could easily be trained to reach for food only upon being given special signs; they would not eat until they heard a particular sound which could be chosen at the discretion of the experimenter. But this bears no analogy, as it has often been interpreted, to human symbolism; on the contrary, it is in opposition to symbolism. A genuine human symbol is characterized not by its uniformity but by its versatility. It is not rigid or inflexible but mobile. It is true that the full *awareness* of this mobility seems to be a rather late achievement in man's intellectual and cultural development. In primitive mentality this awareness is very seldom attained. Here the symbol is still regarded as a property of the thing like other physical properties. In mythical thought the name of a god is an integral part of the nature of the god. If I do not call the god by his right name, then the spell or prayer becomes ineffective. The same holds good for symbolic actions. A religious rite, a sacrifice, must always be performed in the same invariable way and in the same order if it is to have its effect. Children are often greatly confused

when they first learn that not every name of an object is a "proper name," that the same thing may have quite different names in different languages. They tend to think that a thing "is" what it is called. But this is only a first step. Every normal child will learn very soon that it can use various symbols to express the same wish or thought. For this variability and mobility there is apparently no parallel in the animal world. Long before Laura Bridgman had learned to speak, she had developed a very curious mode of expression, a language of her own. This language did not consist of articulated sounds but only of various noises, which are described as "emotional noises." She was in the habit of uttering these sounds in the presence of certain persons. Thus they became entirely individualized; every person in her environment was greeted by a special noise. "Whenever she met unexpectedly an acquaintance," writes Dr. Lieber, "I found that she repeatedly uttered the word for that person before she began to speak. It was the utterance of pleasurable recognition." But when by means of the finger alphabet the child had grasped the meaning of human language the case was altered. Now the sound really became a name: and this name was not bound to an individual person but could be changed if the circumstances seemed to require it. One day, for instance, Laura Bridgman had a letter from her former teacher, Miss Drew, who, in the meantime, by her marriage had become a Mrs. Morton. In this letter she was invited to visit her teacher. This gave her great pleasure, but she found fault with Miss Drew because she had signed the letter with her old name instead of using the name of her husband. She even said that now she must find another noise for her teacher, as the one for Drew must not be the same as that for Morton. It is clear that the former "noises" have here undergone an important and very interesting change in meaning. They are no longer special utterances, inseparable from a particular concrete situation. They have become abstract names. For the new name invented by the child did not designate a new individual but the same individual in a new relationship.

Another important aspect of our general problem now emerges—the problem of the *dependence of relational thought upon symbolic thought*. Without a complex system of symbols relational thought cannot arise at all, much less reach its full development. It would not be correct to say that the mere *awareness* of relations presupposes an intellectual act, an act of logical or abstract thought. Such an awareness is necessary even in elementary acts of perception. The sensational theories used to describe perception as a mosaic of simple sense data. Thinkers of this persuasion constantly overlooked the fact that sensation itself is by no means a mere aggregate or bundle of iso-



lated impressions. Modern Gestalt psychology has corrected this view. It has shown that the very simplest perceptual processes imply fundamental structural elements, certain patterns or configurations. This principle holds both for the human and the animal world. Even in comparatively low stages of animal life the presence of these structural elements—especially of spatial and optical structures—has been experimentally proved. The mere awareness of relations cannot, therefore, be regarded as a specific feature of human consciousness. We do find, however, in man a special type of relational thought which has no parallel in the animal world. In man an ability to isolate relations—to consider them in their abstract meaning—has developed. In order to grasp this meaning man is no longer dependent upon concrete sense data, upon visual, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic data. He considers these relations “in themselves.” . . . Geometry is the classic example of this turning point in man’s intellectual life. Even in elementary geometry we are not bound to the apprehension of concrete individual figures. We are not concerned with physical things or perceptual objects, for we are studying universal spatial relations for whose expression we have an adequate symbolism. Without the preliminary step of human language such an achievement would not be possible. In all the tests which have been made of the processes of abstraction or generalization in animals, this point has become evident. Koehler succeeded in showing the ability of chimpanzees to respond to the *relation* between two or more objects instead of to a particular object. Confronted by two food-containing boxes, the chimpanzee by reason of previous general training would constantly choose the larger—even though the particular object selected might in a previous experiment have been rejected as the smaller of the pair. Similar capacity to respond to the nearer object, the brighter, the bluer, rather than to a particular box was demonstrated. Koehler’s results were confirmed and extended by later experiments. It could be shown that the higher animals are capable of what has been called the “isolation of perceptual factors.” They have the potentiality for singling out a particular perceptual quality of the experimental situation and reacting accordingly. In this sense animals are able to abstract color from size and shape or shape from size and color. In some experiments made by Mrs. Kohts a chimpanzee was able to select from a collection of objects varying extremely in visual qualities those which had some one quality in common; it could, for instance, pick out all objects of a given color and place them in a receiving box. These examples seem to prove that the higher animals are capable of that process which Hume in his theory of knowledge terms making a “*distinction of reason.*” But all the experimenters engaged in these investigations have



also emphasized the rarity, the rudimentariness, and the imperfection of these processes. Even after they have learned to single out a particular quality and to reach toward this, animals are liable to all sort of curious mistakes. If there are certain traces of a *distinctio rationis* in the animal world, they are, as it were, nipped in the bud. They cannot develop because they do not possess that invaluable and indeed indispensable aid of human speech, of a system of symbols.

The first thinker to have clear insight into this problem was Herder. He spoke as a philosopher of humanity who wished to pose the question in entirely "human" terms. Rejecting the metaphysical or theological thesis of a supernatural or divine origin of language, Herder begins with a critical revision of the question itself. Speech is not an object, a physical thing for which we may seek a natural or a supernatural cause. It is a process, a general function of the human mind. Psychologically we cannot describe this process in the terminology which was used by all the psychological schools of the eighteenth century. According to Herder speech is not an artificial creation of reason, nor is it to be accounted for by a special mechanism of associations. In his own attempt to set forth the nature of language Herder lays the whole stress upon what he calls "*reflection*." Reflection or reflective thought is the ability of man to single out from the whole undiscriminated mass of the stream of floating sensuous phenomena certain fixed elements in order to isolate them and to concentrate attention upon them.

Man evinces reflection when the power of his soul acts so freely that it can segregate from the whole ocean of sensation surging through all his senses *one* wave, as it were; and that it can stay this wave, draw attention to it, and be aware of this attention. He evinces reflection when from the whole wavering dream of images rushing through his senses he can collect himself into a moment of waking, dwell on *one* image spontaneously, observe it clearly and more quietly, and abstract characteristics showing him that *this* and no other is the object. Thus he evinces reflection when he can not only perceive all the qualities vividly or clearly but when he can *recognize* one or several of them as distinctive qualities. . . . Now by what means did this recognition come about? Through a characteristic which he had to abstract, and which, as an element of consciousness, presented itself clearly. Well then, let us exclaim: Eureka! This initial character of consciousness was the language of the soul. With this, human language is created.

This has more the appearance of a poetical portrait than of a logical analysis of human speech. Herder's theory of the origin of language remained entirely speculative. It did not proceed from a general theory of knowledge, nor from an observation of empirical facts. It was based on his ideal of humanity and on his profound intuition of the character and development of

human culture. Nevertheless it contains logical and psychological elements of the most valuable sort. All the processes of generalization or abstraction in animals that have been investigated and described with accuracy clearly lack the distinctive mark emphasized by Herder. Later on, however, Herder's view found a rather unexpected clarification and confirmation from a quite different quarter. Recent research in the field of the *psychopathology of language* has led to the conclusion that the loss, or severe impairment, of speech caused by brain injury is never an isolated phenomenon. Such a defect alters the whole character of human behavior. Patients suffering from aphasia or other kindred diseases have not only lost the use of words but have undergone corresponding changes in personality. Such changes are scarcely observable in their outward behavior, for here they tend to act in a perfectly normal manner. They can perform the tasks of everyday life; some of them even develop considerable skill in all tests of this sort. But they are at a complete loss as soon as the solution of the problem requires any specific theoretical or reflective activity. They are no longer able to think in general concepts or categories. Having lost their grip on universals, they stick to the immediate facts, to concrete situations. Such patients are unable to perform any task which can be executed only by means of a comprehension of the abstract. All this is highly significant, for it shows us to what degree that type of thought which Herder calls reflective is dependent on symbolic thought. Without symbolism the life of man would be like that of the prisoners in the cave of Plato's famous simile. Man's life would be confined within the limits of his biological needs and his practical interests; it could find no access to the "ideal world" which is opened to him from different sides by religion, art, philosophy, science.

## LESLIE A. WHITE

**L**ESLIE A. WHITE, chairman of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Michigan, was born in Colorado in 1900. A graduate of Columbia College, he received his Ph.D. in anthropology at the University of Chicago in 1927. He has done ethnological field research among the American Indians, and in Mexico, the Far East, and Indonesia. He is best known for his essays on scientific theories of human behavior and for his concept of cultural evolution.

In interpreting the processes of human societies, White advances in contemporary terms the nineteenth-century evolutionist outlook. He subdivides cultures into technological, sociological, and ideological systems. Although these systems constantly interact, in his view the "primary role is played by the technological system," and "the degree of cultural development varies directly as the efficiency of the tools employed, other factors remaining constant." In contrast to Cassirer, White purports to find objective indices by which different cultures—or different epochs of a given culture—become commensurable. At the same time, however, White asserts in the following selection, which originally appeared as an article in *The Journal of Comparative Psychology* (1942), that it is the human capacity to symbolize that accounts for culture, for that which makes man qualitatively distinct from animals. "Human tool-behavior"—the foundation of the technological system—is dependent upon the prior condition of symbolizing ability. White's position indicates the diversity of uses to which the notion of symbol-using man lends itself.



### ON THE USE OF TOOLS BY PRIMATES

#### "Tools $\times$ Symbols = Culture"

Man has often been characterized as "the tool-using animal," the implication being that no other animal uses tools. Benjamin Franklin went farther, it is said, and defined man as the tool-making animal. A century later, when everyone was discussing Darwinism, many learned men were willing to admit that other animals might use tools, but insisted that man alone was able to make them. The Duke of Argyll, for example, argued in his *Primeval Man* that a great "gulf," a "whole immeasurable distance," lay between man and the brutes with respect to tools. He admitted that some of the lower animals

---

This selection has been reprinted from *The Science of Culture*, Copyright 1949 by Leslie A. White; Farrar, Straus and Young, Inc. publishers, pp. 40-48.

use tools, but he insisted that "in no case whatever do they ever use an implement made by themselves." Edward Clodd also insisted that if man "is not the only tool-user, he is the only tool-maker among the Primates." Darwin, unwilling to go farther than the evidence of his day would permit, wisely left the question open. Today, thanks particularly to the observations and experiments made among chimpanzees by Wolfgang Koehler and reported in his fascinating book, *The Mentality of Apes*, we know that apes can and do make tools. The evidence on this point is accepted as conclusive by such students of primates as R. W. Yerkes, E. A. Hooton, T. C. Schnierla, and A. L. Kroeber. However, we still find some reluctance to admit anthropoids to the category of tool-makers. Thus, the British anthropologist, Grahame Clark, in his recent *From Savagery to Civilization*, asserts that "the understanding use of tools and their purposive devising is a characteristic of man alone." And Wilhelm Schmidt, the leader of the so-called *Kulturkreis* school of anthropology, is unwilling to admit that the lower primates are able even to use "real tools," let alone make them.

Scientific studies of apes during recent decades have disclosed a skill and a versatility in the use of tools that is quite remarkable. They readily employ sticks as levers; they build structures of boxes; use sticks in digging; and otherwise employ a great variety of materials as tools. More noteworthy still, apes (chimpanzees) have shown themselves capable of inventing—by a process of understanding and insight—tools, and of accomplishing their manufacture in instances that required the artificial shaping of materials. Sultan, one of the chimpanzees observed by Koehler, combined two sticks by inserting the end of one into the hollow end of the other, thus making a tool long enough to obtain food hitherto out of reach. "That the combined sticks were perceived and used as a true tool and not used simply by accident," writes the comparative psychologist Schnierla, "was indicated by the fact that when the sticks became separated, the animal straightway reconnected them in a manner that suggested an understanding of their function together." He even contrived to put three sticks together in this manner. Once when the one stick was too large to be inserted into the hollow end of the other, Sultan chewed it down until it would fit. Chimpanzees readily build structures of boxes and crates, sometimes four or five storeys high, in order to obtain food originally suspended out of reach. They demonstrate in this way their ability to modify and to rearrange their environment, to relate one thing to another and to an objective in terms of their physical properties, which is the essence of the tool-process.

The question naturally arises, therefore, why do not apes have a culture, at



least a material culture? Why is it that tool-using among apes is not a cumulative and progressive phenomenon as it is among mankind?

The limitations upon the use of tools by apes are not imposed, it appears, by anatomical or sensory shortcomings. The senses of apes, with the exception of the sense of statics, are quite as keen and as suitable for wielding material objects as are those of men. Nor are apes limited to coarse and crude implements, or to those requiring brute strength rather than delicacy. They can handle string and straws with skill; they are able deftly to remove slivers from their hands and feet. One chimpanzee under observation readily learned to thread a needle. Little Gua, the baby chimpanzee in the Kelloggs' experiment, learned to eat with a spoon more readily than did the child who was trained with her. She was more skillful and effective, too, in her solution of the "suspended cookie test," and in obtaining food by means of a hoe. Thus it appears that the limitations upon the use of tools among apes are not physical in character. As Professor E. A. Hooton has expressed it:

. . . observation of the anthropoid apes does not make it seem probable that their tool-using abilities are strictly limited by the conformation of their hands or arms, in spite of the relative coarseness of these members, resulting, no doubt, from the locomotor and suspensory uses to which they are put. . . . I do not believe that the anthropoid apes are manually incapable of most of the ordinary movements in which man employs his hands.

Professor R. H. Lowie has suggested that the reason for the lack of culture among apes lies in their inability to transmit their tool knowledge and experience from one to another by imitation. "If his neighbors imitated him," says Professor Lowie, speaking of the chimpanzee who invents and uses a tool, "if he taught them his trick and they all passed it on to their offspring, chimpanzees would be on the highroad to culture. But they do nothing of the sort." Professor Lowie seems to be misinformed concerning apes. According to such authorities as R. M. and A. W. Yerkes, "the chimpanzee commonly and with great facility imitates acts." Numerous examples of communication of experience by imitation are to be found also in W. Koehler's *The Mentality of Apes*. Apes, it would appear, really do ape. As E. B. Tylor long ago observed, "the faculty of learning by imitation comes out in the apes in an almost human way." Thus the reason for their lack of a material culture cannot lie in this direction.

It can hardly be argued that apes have no material culture because they have no need for one, or because they could derive no advantage or benefit from it. In the first place we must note that levers, hammers, digging sticks, poking sticks, missiles, etc., are actually used to practical advantage by apes.



Why would not spears and daggers be useful to them in self-protection? Would not bags be useful to carry or store food or other things? To turn from the practical and utilitarian to the esthetic and recreational, and, noting the fondness of chimpanzees for games, dancing, and personal adornment, would not drums, rattles, necklaces, gorgets, and a hundred other similar things bring endless joy and satisfaction to the simian heart? Indeed, the ape could use and enjoy a culture quite as well as his human cousin.

Why, then, do apes lack a material culture? It is due to his "lack of brains," or "lack of intelligence," according to Professor Hooton. This in our opinion, is quite correct. But it is not a sufficient answer. Merely to say "lack of brains" tells us very little about the difference between the use of tools by man and ape.

The essential difference between apes and men with regard to use of tools is not, as we have seen, that man is more skillful, versatile, or even inventive. As a matter of fact, the inventive ability of man is frequently over-rated. The archeological record of cultural development makes it clear that until relatively recent times inventions were decidedly infrequent; thousands of years might elapse between the appearance of an awl and the invention of the needle—although all one had to do to effect this advance was to drill a hole in the blunt end of the awl. The invention of the steamboat is often regarded as a great achievement and indeed it was. Yet it consisted merely of combining already existing tools—an engine and a boat—of putting one and one together. Chimpanzees are able to do this. Nor does the difference between man and ape lie in an ability to imitate, to communicate tool-experience from one to another, for, as we have noted, apes freely do this. The fundamental difference consists in the fact that the use of tools among men is a cumulative and progressive process whereas among apes it is neither. This is not to say that an individual ape does not make progress in his use of tools nor that he cannot increase his repertory of tool behavior. What we are saying is that apes as species make no progress in tool-using; one generation is no further advanced than its predecessor. With man, of course, it is the reverse: each generation may build upon and add to the tools and techniques of its predecessors. It is precisely this process of accumulation and progress in technology that has lifted man from the level of the brute and carried him through savagery and barbarism to civilization.

But our question is still unanswered: Why does this difference between man and ape exist?

Tool-using among men is a different kind of activity, fundamentally and qualitatively different in a psychological sense, from tool-using among apes.

Among apes the use of tools is a conceptual process as well as a neuro-sensory-muscular one. By conceptual we mean the formation by the ape of a configuration of behavior in which he, a tool, and the thing upon which the tool is to be used are functionally related to one another. The ape is able to solve his problem by means of insight and understanding, and to effect the solution implicitly before he executes it overtly. This is what we mean by *conceptual*. In the human species, the tool process is also conceptual and neuro-sensory-muscular in character. But it is more than this; it is *symbolic* as well. Human beings express their concepts in symbolic form. Thus they not only have tools and concepts of tools, but they have and use *words* of tools—axe, knife, hammer, etc. *It was the introduction of symbols, word-formed symbols, into the tool process that transformed anthropoid tool-behavior into human tool-behavior.*

We must distinguish two aspects of the tool-using process, the intra-organismal and the extra-organismal, the subjective and the overt or explicit. On the one hand we have the animal's sensory perception of tools and other material objects in the external world and his bodily reactions to them. On the other hand, are the inner, neural processes of imagination and insight in which patterns of behavior to be executed overtly are formed. In short, we have the inner, mental aspect of tool-using and the outer, motor aspect.

A significant characteristic of ape tool-behavior is that it is a discontinuous psychological process. In its overt, motor aspect the discontinuity of tool-experience is, of course, a necessity; one cannot be engaged in wielding tools all the time. But in the ape, tool-experience is discontinuous on the subjective side as well as upon the objective. "Out of sight out of mind" fairly well characterizes the ape's mentality. Koehler observes that the "disappearance of a sick (or dying) animal (chimpanzee) has little effect on the rest, so long as he is taken out of sight." There is some foresight and some hindsight in the ape. But the characteristic feature of their mental life is the "extremely narrow limits" of the temporal world in which they live; this, according to Koehler, is "the chief difference . . . between anthropoids and even the most primitive human beings." The ape lives in a small world. Spatially it is confined to the range of his senses; temporally it is limited to the moment, with perhaps an occasional dawn of anticipation and a twilight of reminiscence. Thus, tool-experience in the ape is a series of disconnected episodes. He wields a tool then lays it down. When he is confronted by a "tool situation" he sizes up the situation, formulates a plan, puts it into execution, solves his problem, and that is the end of it. On the inner, subjective side, the ape's tool-experience is limited to the external and overt experience. Tool-using

among apes is thus a discontinuous psychological process subjectively as well as objectively.

With man, tool-experience is quite different. Overtly, tool-using is a discontinuous process as, of course, it must be. But subjectively, tool-experience in man is continuous and enduring.

Man differs from the apes, and indeed all other living creatures so far as we know, in that he is capable of symbolic behavior. With words man creates a new world, a world of ideas and philosophies. In this world man lives just as truly as in the physical world of his senses. Indeed, man feels that the essential quality of his existence consists in his occupancy of this world of symbols and ideas—or, as he sometimes calls it, the world of the mind or spirit. This world of ideas comes to have a continuity and a permanence that the external world of the senses can never have. It is not made up of the present only, but of a past and a future as well. Temporally it is not a succession of disconnected episodes, but a continuum extending to infinity in both directions, from eternity to eternity. As John Dewey has aptly expressed it:

Man differs from the lower animals because he preserves his past experiences. . . . With animals, an experience perishes as it happens, and each new doing or suffering stands alone. But man lives in a world where each occurrence is charged with echoes and reminiscences of what has gone before, where each event is a reminder of other things. Hence he lives not, like the beasts of the field, in a world of merely physical things but in a world of signs and symbols.

This inner world of ideas in which man dwells seems more real to him than the outer world of the senses. We have a classic example of this in the philosophy of idealism: ideas come first; they are the real things; they endure forever; material objects and sensory experiences are merely imperfect and ephemeral manifestations of the Ideas.<sup>1</sup> We have essentially the same idea, though perhaps in a more primitive, and also more graphic, form in the Christian conception of the Word: "In the beginning was the Word." The Word is also creative: from the spoken word the world came into being. The Word also became flesh. Thus, in man's naïve philosophies, ideas and words come first. They are "more real" than the things of the senses. They are enduring and eternal.

It is in such a world as this that man knows and wields tools. To him a tool is not merely a material object, or even a sensory image as it may be to

<sup>1</sup> Plato thought of these ideas as "laid up in the mind of God" rather than originating and functioning in the minds of men. But it is not uncommon for man to mistake himself for God; even great philosophers are guilty of this error occasionally.

an ape. It is also an idea. It is part of that timeless inner world in which man lives. It is not something that exists for the moment only: it functions in the living past and is projected into the unborn future. The tool in man's mind, like Plato's ideas in the mind of God, is eternal. Hence tool-experience for man is more than a series of disconnected episodes, of grasping and using tools and laying them down again. These overt acts are merely occasional expressions of an ideational experience within him that is continuous and unbroken.

Thus the difference between ape and man: In the ape, tool-experience is a series of discrete episodes; the inner experience begins and ends with the overt act. In man, tool-experience is a continuum. Though the overt expression of this experience is disconnected and episodic, the inner experience is an uninterrupted flow. And it is the symbol, the word-formed idea, that makes this continuity of experience possible.

When Professor Lowie endeavors to account for the ape's lack of culture by the inability to imitate, and hence to transmit and perpetuate tool-experience, he is really on the right track even though his premise is wrong. For what he is getting at is continuity of experience. Similarly, Professor A. L. Kroeber in discussing "the inventive but cultureless ape," suggests that "perhaps the thing which essentially makes culture is precisely those transmissive and preservative elements, those relational or binding factors, which social scientists have indeed occupied themselves with, but have been inclined to regard as after all of secondary importance in comparison with the dynamic phenomenon of invention."

Culture without continuity of experience is, of course, impossible. But what sort of continuity of experience is prerequisite to culture? It is not the continuity which comes from the communication of experience by imitation, for we find this among apes. Clearly, it is continuity on the subjective side rather than on the objective, or overt, that is essential. . . . [It] is the symbol, particularly in word form, which provides this element of continuity in the tool-experience of man. And, finally, it is this factor of continuity in man's tool-experience that has made accumulation and progress, in short, a material culture, possible.



## EDWARD SAPIR

**T**RAINED primarily as a linguist, Edward Sapir had a remarkably fertile mind and contributed not only to linguistic description and analysis but also to anthropology and literary criticism. Sapir was born in Germany in 1884, was brought to the United States at the age of five, and did his undergraduate and graduate work at Columbia University. Early in his academic career he specialized in the study of living languages, in particular those of the American Indians. First at the University of Chicago and later at Yale he applied the insights gained through the rigorous analysis of the formal structure of language to studies of the role of language in cultural phenomena, the relations between personality, culture, and speech, and the symbolic mechanism operative in neuroses and psychoses. Sapir died in 1939, after having shown promise of integrating many studies undertaken in these varied areas.

For Sapir, language is an elemental human capacity, the primal way in which men organize experience and communicate one with the other. In his writings on culture and personality, Sapir proposes as an ethical imperative that the impulses of the self be reconciled with the requirements for a harmonious life of community. To this end the self, while always preserving its own uniqueness, must seek for publicly sanctioned forms of expression. The channels of social and cultural communication should never become frozen; they should be extended to disclose novel patterns for acquiring spiritual satisfactions, and deepened to sustain and enrich the social experience of the human community.

The following selections, written by Sapir for the *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (1930-35), explore the most pervasive of man's symbolic systems. The author's expository vein does not conceal the underlying humanistic and ethical convictions which his research cumulatively reinforced.



### LANGUAGE

The gift of speech and a well ordered language are characteristic of every known group of human beings. No tribe has ever been found which is without language, and all statements to the contrary may be dismissed as mere folklore. There seems to be no warrant whatever for the statement which is sometimes made that there are certain peoples whose vocabulary is so limited

---

This selection has been reprinted from Edward Sapir, "Communication" and "Language," from *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (Vol. IV, pp. 78-81; Vol. IX, pp. 155-169, Copyright 1931 and 1933 by The Macmillan Company, New York) by permission of the publisher.



that they cannot get on without the supplementary use of gesture, so that intelligible communication between members of such a group becomes impossible in the dark. The truth of the matter is that language is an essentially perfect means of expression and communication among every known people. Of all aspects of culture, it is a fair guess that language was the first to receive a highly developed form and that its essential perfection is a prerequisite to the development of culture as a whole.

There are some general characteristics which apply to all languages, living or extinct, written or unwritten. In the first place, language is primarily a system of phonetic symbols for the expression of communicable thought and feeling. In other words, the symbols of language are differentiated products of the vocal behavior which is associated with the larynx of the higher mammals. As a mere matter of theory, it is conceivable that something like a linguistic structure could have been evolved out of gesture or other forms of bodily behavior. The fact that at an advanced stage in the history of the human race writing emerged in close imitation of the pattern of spoken language proves that language as a purely instrumental and logical device is not dependent on the use of articulate sounds. Nevertheless, the actual history of man and a wealth of anthropological evidence indicate with overwhelming certainty that phonetic language takes precedence over all other kinds of communicative symbolism, which are, by comparison, either substitutive, like writing, or merely supplementary, like the gesture accompanying speech. . . .

[Language] has certain psychological qualities which make it peculiarly important for the student of social science. In the first place, language is felt to be a perfect symbolic system, in a perfectly homogeneous medium for the handling of all references and meanings that a given culture is capable of, whether these be in the form of actual communications or in that of such ideal substitutes of communication as thinking. The content of every culture is expressible in its language and there are no linguistic materials whether as to content or form which are not felt to symbolize actual meanings, whatever may be the attitude of those who belong to other cultures. New cultural experiences frequently make it necessary to enlarge the resources of a language, but such enlargement is never an arbitrary addition to the materials and forms already present; it is merely a further application of principles already in use and in many cases little more than a metaphorical extension of old terms and meanings. It is highly important to realize that once the form of a language is established it can discover meanings for its speakers which are not simply traceable to the given quality of experience itself but

must be explained to a large extent as the projection of potential meanings into the raw material of experience. If a man who has never seen more than a single elephant in the course of his life, nevertheless speaks without the slightest hesitation of ten elephants or a million elephants or a herd of elephants or of elephants walking two by two or three by three or of generations of elephants, it is obvious that language has the power to analyze experience into theoretically dissociable elements and to create that world of the potential intergrading with the actual which enables human beings to transcend the immediately given in their individual experiences and to join in a larger common understanding. This common understanding constitutes culture, which cannot be adequately defined by a description of those more colorful patterns of behavior in society which lie open to observation. Language is heuristic, not merely in the simple sense which this example suggests, but in the much more far-reaching sense that its forms predetermine for us certain modes of observation and interpretation. This means of course that as our scientific experience grows we must learn to fight the implications of language. "The grass waves in the wind" is shown by its linguistic form to be a member of the same relational class of experiences as "The man works in the house." As an interim solution of the problem of expressing the experience referred to in this sentence it is clear that the language has proved useful, for it has made significant use of certain symbols of conceptual relation, such as agency and location. If we feel the sentence to be poetic or metaphorical, it is largely because other more complex types of experience with their appropriate symbolisms of reference enable us to reinterpret the situation and to say, for instance, "The grass is waved by the wind" or "The wind causes the grass to wave." The point is that no matter how sophisticated our modes of interpretation become, we never really get beyond the projection and continuous transfer of relations suggested by the forms of our speech. After all, to say "Friction causes such and such a result" is not very different from saying "The grass waves in the wind." Language is at one and the same time helping and retarding us in our exploration of experience, and the details of these processes of help and hindrance are deposited in the subtler meanings of different cultures.

A further psychological characteristic of language is the fact that while it may be looked upon as a symbolic system which reports or refers to or otherwise substitutes for direct experience, it does not as a matter of actual behavior stand apart from or run parallel to direct experience but completely interpenetrates with it. This is indicated by the widespread feeling, particularly among primitive people, of that virtual identity or close correspondence of

word and thing which leads to the magic of spells. On our own level it is generally difficult to make a complete divorce between objective reality and our linguistic symbols of reference to it; and things, qualities, and events are on the whole felt to be what they are called. For the normal person every experience, real or potential, is saturated with verbalism. This explains why so many lovers of nature, for instance, do not feel that they are truly in touch with it until they have mastered the names of a great many flowers and trees, as though the primary world of reality were a verbal one and as though one could not get close to nature unless one first mastered the terminology which somehow magically expresses it. It is this constant interplay between language and experience which removes language from the cold status of such purely and simply symbolic systems as mathematical symbolism or flag signaling. This interpenetration is not only an intimate associative fact; it is also a contextual one. It is important to realize that language may not only refer to experience or even mold, interpret, and discover experience, but that it also substitutes for it in the sense that in those sequences of interpersonal behavior which form the greater part of our daily lives speech and action supplement each other and do each other's work in a web of unbroken pattern. If one says to me "Lend me a dollar," I may hand over the money without a word or I may give it with an accompanying "Here it is" or I may say "I haven't got it" or "I'll give it to you tomorrow." Each of these responses is structurally equivalent, if one thinks of the larger behavior pattern. It is clear that if language is in its analyzed form a symbolic system of reference, it is far from being merely that if we consider the psychological part that it plays in continuous behavior. The reason for this almost unique position of intimacy which language holds among all known symbolisms is probably the fact that it is learned in the earliest years of childhood.

It is because it is learned early and piecemeal, in constant association with the color and the requirements of actual contents, that language, in spite of its quasi-mathematical form, is rarely a purely referential organization. It tends to be so only in scientific discourse, and even there it may be seriously doubted whether the ideal of pure reference is ever attained by language. Ordinary speech is directly expressive and the purely formal pattern of sounds, words, grammatical forms, phrases and sentences are always to be thought of as compounded by intended or unintended symbolisms of expression, if they are to be understood fully from the standpoint of behavior. The choice of words in a particular context may convey the opposite of what they mean on the surface. The same external message is differently interpreted according to whether the speaker has this or that psychological status in his

personal relations, or whether such primary expressions as those of affection or anger or fear may inform the spoken words with a significance which completely transcends their normal value. On the whole, however, there is no danger that the expressive character of language will be overlooked. It is too obvious a fact to call for much emphasis. What is often overlooked and is, as a matter of fact, not altogether easy to understand is that the quasi-mathematical patterns, as we have called them, of the grammarian's language, unreal as these are in a contextual sense, have, nevertheless, a tremendous intuitive vitality; and that these patterns, never divorced in experience from the expressive ones, are nevertheless easily separated from them by the normal individual. The fact that almost any word or phrase can be made to take on an infinite variety of meanings seems to indicate that in all language behavior there are intertwined, in enormously complex patterns, isolable patterns of two distinct orders. These may be roughly defined as patterns of reference and patterns of expression. . . .

It is difficult to see adequately the functions of language, because it is so deeply rooted in the whole of human behavior that it may be suspected that there is little in the functional side of our conscious behavior in which language does not play its part. The primary function of language is generally said to be communication. There can be no quarrel with this so long as it is distinctly understood that there may be effective communication without overt speech and that language is highly relevant to situations which are not obviously of a communicative sort. To say that thought, which is hardly possible in any sustained sense without the symbolic organization brought by language, is that form of communication in which the speaker and the person addressed are identified in one person is not far from begging the question. The autistic speech of children seems to show that the purely communicative aspect of language has been exaggerated. It is best to admit that language is primarily a vocal actualization of the tendency to see realities symbolically, that it is precisely this quality which renders it a fit instrument for communication and that it is in the actual give and take of social intercourse that it has been complicated and refined into the form in which it is known today. Besides the very general function which language fulfills in the spheres of thought, communication, and expression which are implicit in its very nature, there may be pointed out a number of special derivatives of these which are of particular interest to students of society.

Language is a great force of socialization, probably the greatest that exists. By this is meant not merely the obvious fact that significant social intercourse



is hardly possible without language but that the mere fact of a common speech serves as a peculiarly potent symbol of the social solidarity of those who speak the language. The psychological significance of this goes far beyond the association of particular languages with nationalities, political entities, or smaller local groups. In between the recognized dialect of language as a whole and the individualized speech of a given individual lies a kind of linguistic unit which is not often discussed by the linguist but which is of the greatest importance to social psychology. This is the subform of a language which is current among a group of people who are held together by ties of common interest. Such a group may be a family, the undergraduates of a college, a labor union, the underworld in a large city, the members of a club, a group of four or five friends who hold together through life in spite of differences of professional interest, and untold thousands of other kinds of groups. Each of these tends to develop peculiarities of speech which have the symbolic function of somehow distinguishing the group from the larger group into which its members might be too completely absorbed. The complete absence of linguistic indices of such small groups is obscurely felt as a defect or sign of emotional poverty. Within the confines of a particular family, for instance, the name "Georgy," having once been mispronounced "Doody" in childhood, may take on the latter form forever after; and this unofficial pronunciation of a familiar name as applied to a particular person becomes a very important symbol indeed of the solidarity of a particular family and continuance of the sentiment that keeps its members together. A stranger cannot lightly take on the privilege of saying "Doody" if the members of the family feel that he is not entitled to go beyond the degree of familiarity symbolized by the use of "Georgy" or "George." Again, no one is entitled to say "trig" or "math" who has not gone through such familiar and painful experiences as a high school or undergraduate student. The use of such words at once declares the speaker a member of an unorganized but psychologically real group. A self-made mathematician has hardly the right to use the word "math" in referring to his own interests because the student overtones of the word do not properly apply to him. The extraordinary importance of minute linguistic differences for the symbolization of psychologically real as contrasted with politically or sociologically official groups is intuitively felt by most people. "He talks like us" is equivalent to saying "He is one of us."

There is another important sense in which language is a socializer beyond its literal use as a means of communication. This is in the establishment of rapport between the members of a physical group, such as a house party. It



is not what is said that matters so much as that something is said. Particularly where cultural understandings of an intimate sort are somewhat lacking among the members of a physical group it is felt to be important that the lack be made good by a constant supply of small talk. This caressing or reassuring quality of speech in general, even where no one has anything of moment to communicate, reminds us how much more language is than a mere technique of communication. Nothing better shows how completely the life of man as an animal made over by culture is dominated by the verbal substitutes for the physical world.

The use of language in cultural accumulation and historical transmission is obvious and important. This applies not only to sophisticated levels but to primitive ones as well. A great deal of the cultural stock in trade of a primitive society is presented in a more or less well defined linguistic form. Proverbs, medicine formulae, standardized prayers, folk tales, standardized speeches, song texts, genealogies are some of the more overt forms which language takes as a culture-preserving instrument. The pragmatic ideal of education, which aims to reduce the influence of standardized lore to a minimum and to get the individual to educate himself through as direct a contact as possible with the realities of his environment, is certainly not realized among the primitives, who are often as word-bound as the humanistic tradition itself. Few cultures perhaps have gone to the length of the classical Chinese culture or of the rabbinical Jewish culture in making the word do duty for the thing or the personal experience as the ultimate unit of reality. Modern civilization as a whole, with its schools, its libraries, and its endless stores of knowledge, opinion, and sentiment stored up in verbalized form, would be unthinkable without language made eternal as document. On the whole, we probably tend to exaggerate the differences between "high" and "low" cultures or saturated and emergent cultures in the matter of traditionally conserved verbal authority. The enormous differences that seem to exist are rather differences in the outward form and content of the culture themselves than in the psychological relation which obtains between the individual and his culture.

In spite of the fact that language acts as a socializing and uniformizing force, it is at the same time the most potent single known factor for the growth of individuality. The fundamental quality of one's voice, the phonetic patterns of speech, the speed and relative smoothness of articulation, the length and build of the sentences, the character and range of the vocabulary, the scholastic consistency of the words used, the readiness with which words respond to the requirements of the social environment, in particular the suit-

ability of one's language to the language habits of the persons addressed—all these are so many complex indicators of the personality. "Actions speak louder than words" may be an excellent maxim from the pragmatic point of view but betrays little insight into the nature of speech. The language habits of people are by no means irrelevant as unconscious indicators of the more important traits of their personalities, and the folk is psychologically wiser than the adage in paying a great deal of attention, willingly or not, to the psychological significance of a man's language. The normal person is never convinced by the mere content of speech but is very sensitive to many of the implications of language behavior, however feebly (if at all) these may have been consciously analyzed. All in all, it is not too much to say that one of the really important functions of language is to be constantly declaring to society the psychological place held by all of its members.

Besides this more general type of personality expression or fulfillment there is to be kept in mind the important role which language plays as a substitutive means of expression for those individuals who have a greater than normal difficulty in adjusting to the environment in terms of primary action patterns. Even in the most primitive cultures the strategic word is likely to be more powerful than the direct blow. It is unwise to speak too blithely of "mere" words, for to do so may be to imperil the value and perhaps the very existence of civilization and personality. . . .

The importance of language as a whole for the definition, expression, and transmission of culture is undoubted. The relevance of linguistic details, in both content and form, for the profounder understanding of culture is also clear. It does not follow, however, that there is a simple correspondence between the form of a language and the form of the culture of those who speak it. The tendency to see linguistic categories as directly expressive of overt cultural outlines, which seems to have come into fashion among certain sociologists and anthropologists, should be resisted as in no way warranted by the actual facts. There is no general correlation between cultural type and linguistic structure. So far as can be seen, isolating or agglutinative or inflective types of speech are possible on any level of civilization. Nor does the presence or absence of grammatical gender, for example, seem to have any relevance for our understanding of the social organization or religion or folklore of the associated peoples. If there were any such parallelism as has sometimes been maintained, it would be quite impossible to understand the rapidity with which culture diffuses in spite of profound linguistic differences between the borrowing and giving communities.

The cultural significance of linguistic form, in other words, lies on a much more submerged level than on the overt one of definite cultural pattern. It is only very rarely, as a matter of fact, that it can be pointed out how a cultural trait has had some influence on the fundamental structure of a language. To a certain extent this lack of correspondence may be due to the fact that linguistic changes do not proceed at the same rate as most cultural changes, which are on the whole far more rapid. Short of yielding to another language which takes its place, linguistic organization, largely because it is unconscious, tends to maintain itself indefinitely and does not allow its fundamental formal categories to be seriously influenced by changing cultural needs. If the forms of culture and language were, then, in complete correspondence with each other, the nature of the processes making for linguistic and cultural changes respectively would soon bring about a lack of necessary correspondence. This is exactly what is found as a mere matter of descriptive fact. Logically it is indefensible that the masculine, feminine, and neuter genders of German and Russian should be allowed to continue their sway in the modern world; but any intellectualist attempt to weed out these unnecessary genders would obviously be fruitless, for the normal speaker does not actually feel the clash which the logician requires.

It is another matter when we pass from general form to the detailed content of a language. Vocabulary is a very sensitive index of the culture of a people and changes of the meaning, loss of old words, the creation and borrowing of new ones are all dependent on the history of culture itself. Languages differ widely in the nature of their vocabularies. Distinctions which seem inevitable to us may be utterly ignored in languages which reflect an entirely different type of culture, while these in turn insist on distinctions which are all but unintelligible to us.

Such differences of vocabulary go far beyond the names of cultural objects such as arrow point, coat of armor, or gunboat. They apply just as well to the mental world. It would be difficult in some languages, for instance, to express the distinction which we feel between "to kill" and "to murder," for the simple reason that the underlying legal philosophy which determines our use of these words does not seem natural to all societies. Abstract terms, which are so necessary to our thinking, may be infrequent in a language whose speakers formulate their behavior on more pragmatic lines. On the other hand, the question of presence or absence of abstract nouns may be bound up with the fundamental form of the language; and there exist a large number of primitive languages whose structure allows of the very ready creation and use of abstract nouns of quality or action.

There are many language patterns of a special sort which are of interest to the social scientist. One of these is the tendency to create tabus for certain words or names. A very widespread custom, for instance, among primitive peoples is the tabu which is placed not only on the use of the name of a person recently deceased but of any word that is etymologically connected in the feeling of the speakers with such a name. This means that ideas have often to be expressed by circumlocutions, or that terms must be borrowed from neighboring dialects. Sometimes certain names or words are too holy to be pronounced except under very special conditions, and curious patterns of behavior develop which are designed to prevent one from making use of such interdicted terms. An example of this is the Jewish custom of pronouncing the Hebrew name for God, not as Yahwe or Jehovah but as Adonai, "My Lord." Such customs seem strange to us but equally strange to many primitive communities would be our extraordinary reluctance to pronounce obscene words under normal social conditions.

Another class of special linguistic phenomena is the use of esoteric language devices, such as passwords or technical terminologies for ceremonial attitudes or practices. Among the Eskimo, for instance, the medicine man has a peculiar vocabulary which is not understood by those who are not members of his guild. Special dialectic forms or otherwise peculiar linguistic patterns are common among primitive peoples for the texts of songs. Sometimes, as in Melanesia, such song texts are due to the influence of neighboring dialects. This is strangely analogous to the practice among ourselves of singing songs in Italian, French, or German rather than in English, and it is likely that the historical processes which have led to the parallel custom are of a similar nature. Thieves' jargon and secret languages of children may also be mentioned. These lead over into special sign and gesture languages, many of which are based directly on spoken or written speech; they seem to exist on many levels of culture. The sign language of the Plains Indians of North America arose in response to the need for some medium of communication between tribes speaking mutually unintelligible languages. Within the Christian church we may note the elaboration of gesture languages by orders of monks vowed to silence.

Not only a language or a terminology but the mere external form in which it is written may become important as a symbol of sentimental or social distinction. Thus Croatian and Serbian are essentially the same language but they are presented in very different outward forms, the former being written in Latin characters, the latter in the Cyrillic character of the Greek Orthodox church. This external difference, associated with a difference in



religion, has of course the important function of preventing people who speak closely related languages or dialects but who wish for reasons of sentiment not to confound themselves in a larger unity from becoming too keenly aware of how much they actually resemble each other.

The relation of language to nationalism and internationalism presents a number of interesting sociological problems. Anthropology makes a rigid distinction between ethnic units based on race, on culture, and on language. It points out that these do not need to coincide in the least—that they do not, as a matter of fact, often coincide in reality. But with the increased emphasis on nationalism in modern times, the question of the symbolic meaning of race and language has taken on a new significance and, whatever the scientist may say, the layman is ever inclined to see culture, language, and race as but different facets of a single social unity which he tends in turn to identify with such political entities as England or France or Germany. To point out, as the anthropologist easily can, that cultural distributions and nationalities override language and race groups, does not end the matter for the sociologist, because he feels that the concept of nation or nationality must be integrally imaged in behavior by the nonanalytical person as carrying with it the connotation, real or supposed, of both race and language. From this standpoint it really makes little difference whether history and anthropology support the popular identification of nationality, language, and race. The important thing to hold on to is that a particular language tends to become the fitting expression of a self-conscious nationality and that such a group will construct for itself, in spite of all that the physical anthropologist can do, a race to which is to be attributed the mystic power of creating a language and a culture as twin expressions of its psychic peculiarities.

So far as language and race are concerned, it is true that the major races of man have tended in the past to be set off against each other by important differences of language. There is less point to this, however, than might be imagined, because the linguistic differentiations within any given race are just as far-reaching as those which can be pointed out across racial lines, yet they do not at all correspond to subracial units. Even the major races are not always clearly sundered by language. This is notably the case with the Malayo-Polynesian languages, which are spoken by peoples as racially distinct as the Malays, the Polynesians, and the Negroes of Melanesia. Not one of the great languages of modern man follows racial lines. French, for example, is spoken by a highly mixed population which is largely Nordic in the north, Alpine in the center, and Mediterranean in the south, each of those subraces being liberally represented in the rest of Europe.



While language differences have always been important symbols of cultural difference, it is only in comparatively recent times, with the exaggerated development of the ideal of the sovereign nation and with the resulting eagerness to discover linguistic symbols for this ideal of sovereignty, that language differences have taken on an implication of antagonism. In ancient Rome and all through mediaeval Europe there were plenty of cultural differences running side by side with linguistic ones, and the political status of Roman citizen or the fact of adherence to the Roman Catholic church was of vastly greater significance as a symbol of the individual's place in the world than the language or dialect he happened to speak. It is probably altogether incorrect to maintain that language differences are responsible for national antagonisms. It would seem to be much more reasonable to suppose that a political and national unit, once definitely formed, uses a prevailing language as a symbol of its identity, whence gradually emerges the peculiarly modern feeling that every language should properly be the expression of a distinctive nationality.

In earlier times there seems to have been little systematic attempt to impose the language of a conquering people on the subject people, although it happened frequently as a result of the processes implicit in the spread of culture that such a conqueror's language was gradually taken over by the dispossessed population. Witness the spread of the Romance languages and of the modern Arabic dialects. On the other hand, it seems to have happened about as frequently that the conquering group was culturally and linguistically absorbed and that their own language disappeared without necessary danger to their privileged status. Thus foreign dynasties in China have always submitted to the superior culture of the Chinese and have taken on their language. In the same way the Moslem Moguls of India, while true to their religion, made one of the Hindu vernaculars the basis of the great literary language of Moslem India, Hindustani. Definitely repressive attitudes toward the languages and the dialects of subject peoples seem to be distinctive only of European political policy in comparatively recent times. The attempt of czarist Russia to stamp out Polish by forbidding its teaching in the schools and the similarly repressive policy of . . . Italy in its attempt to wipe out German from the territory . . . acquired from Austria are illuminating examples of the heightened emphasis on language as a symbol of political allegiance in the modern world.

To match these repressive measures, we have the oft repeated attempt of minority groups to erect their language into the status of a fully accredited medium of cultural and literary expression. Many of these restored or semi-

manufactured languages have come in on the wave of resistance to political or cultural hostility. Such are the Gaelic of Ireland . . . and the Hebrew of the Zionists. Other such languages have come in more peacefully because of a sentimental interest in local culture. Such are the modern Provençal of southern France, the Plattdeutsch of northern Germany, Frisian, and the Norwegian *landsmaal*. It is very doubtful whether these persistent attempts to make true culture languages of local dialects that have long ceased to be of primary literary importance can succeed in the long run. The failure of modern Provençal to hold its own and the very dubious success of Gaelic make it seem probable that, following the recent tendency to resurrect minor languages, there will come a renewed leveling of speech more suitably expressing the internationalism which is slowly emerging. . . .

### COMMUNICATION

It is obvious that for the building up of society, its units and subdivisions, and the understandings which prevail between its members some processes of communication are needed. While we often speak of society as though it were a static structure defined by tradition, it is, in the more intimate sense, nothing of the kind, but a highly intricate network of partial or complete understandings between the members of organizational units of every degree of size and complexity, ranging from a pair of lovers or a family to a league of nations or that ever increasing portion of humanity which can be reached by the press through all its transnational ramifications. It is only apparently a static sum of social institutions; actually it is being reanimated or creatively reaffirmed from day to day by particular acts of a communicative nature which obtain among individuals participating in it. Thus the Republican party cannot be said to exist as such, but only to the extent that its tradition is being constantly added to and upheld by such simple acts of communication as that John Doe votes the Republican ticket, thereby communicating a certain kind of message, or that a half-dozen individuals meet at a certain time and place, formally or informally, in order to communicate ideas to each other and eventually to decide what points of national interest, real or supposed, are to be allowed to come up many months later for discussion in a gathering of members of the party. The Republican party as a historic entity is merely abstracted from thousands upon thousands of such single acts of communication, which have in common certain persistent features of reference. If we extend this example into every conceivable field in which communication has a place, we soon realize that every cultural pattern and every

single act of social behavior involve communication in either an explicit or an implicit sense.

One may conveniently distinguish between certain fundamental techniques, or primary processes, which are communicative in character, and certain secondary techniques which facilitate the process of communication. The distinction is perhaps of no great psychological importance but has a very real historical and sociological significance, inasmuch as the fundamental processes are common to all mankind, while the secondary techniques emerge only at relatively sophisticated levels of civilization. Among the primary communicative processes of society may be mentioned: language; gesture, in its widest sense; the imitation of overt behavior; and a large and ill-defined group of implicit processes which grow out of overt behavior and which may be rather vaguely referred to as "social suggestion." . . .

Language is the most explicit type of communicative behavior that we know of. . . . [It] is the communicative process par excellence in every known society, and it is exceedingly important to observe that whatever may be the shortcomings of a primitive society judged from the vantage point of civilization, its language inevitably forms as sure, complete, and potentially creative an apparatus of referential symbolism as the most sophisticated language that we know of. What this means for a theory of communication is that the mechanics of significant understanding between human beings are as sure and complex and rich in overtones in one society as in another, primitive or sophisticated.

Gesture includes much more than the manipulation of the hands and other visible and movable parts of the organism. Intonations of the voice may register attitudes and feelings quite as significantly as the clenched fist, the wave of the hand, the shrugging of the shoulders, or the lifting of the eyebrows. The field of gesture interplays constantly with that of language proper, but there are many facts of a psychological and historical order which show that there are subtle yet firm lines of demarcation between them. Thus, to give but one example, the consistent message delivered by language symbolism in the narrow sense, whether by speech or by writing, may flatly contradict the message communicated by the synchronous system of gestures, consisting of movements of the hands and head, intonations of the voice, and breathing symbolism. The former system may be entirely conscious, the latter entirely unconscious. Linguistic, as opposed to gesture, communication tends to be the official and socially accredited one; hence one may intuitively interpret the relatively unconscious symbolism of gesture as psychologically more significant in a given context than the words actually used. In such

cases as these we have a conflict between explicit and implicit communications in the growth of the individual's social experience.

The primary condition for the consolidation of society is the imitation of overt behavior. Such imitation, while not communicative in intent, has always the retroactive value of a communication, for in the process of falling in with the ways of society one in effect acquiesces in the meanings that inhere in these ways. When one learns to go to church, for instance, because other members of the community set the pace for this kind of activity, it is as though a communication had been received and acted upon. It is the function of language to articulate and rationalize the full content of these informal communications in the growth of the individual's social experience.

Even less directly communicative in character than overt behavior and its imitation is "social suggestion" as the sum total of new acts and new meanings that are implicitly made possible by these types of social behavior. Thus, the particular method of revolting against the habit of church going in a given society, while contradictory, on the surface, of the conventional meanings of that society, may nevertheless receive all its social significance from hundreds of existing prior communications that belong to the culture of the group as a whole. The importance of the unformulated and un verbalized communications of society is so great that one who is not intuitively familiar with them is likely to be baffled by the significance of certain kinds of behavior, even if he is thoroughly aware of their external forms and of the verbal symbols that accompany them. It is largely the function of the artist to make articulate these more subtle intentions of society.

Communicative processes do not merely apply to society as such; they are indefinitely varied as to form and meaning for the various types of personal relationship into which society resolves itself. Thus a fixed type of conduct or a linguistic symbol has by no means necessarily the same communicative significance within the confines of the family, among the members of an economic group, and in the nation at large. Generally speaking, the smaller the circle and the more complex the understandings already arrived at within it, the more economical can the act of communication afford to become. A single word passed between members of an intimate group, in spite of its apparent vagueness and ambiguity, may constitute a far more precise communication than volumes of carefully prepared correspondence interchanged between two governments.

There seem to be three main classes of techniques which have for their object the facilitation of the primary communicative processes of society. These may be referred to as: language transfers; symbolisms arising from



special technical situations; and the creation of physical conditions favorable for the communicative act. Of language transfers the best known example is writing. The Morse telegraph code is another example. These and many other communicative techniques have this in common, that while they are overtly not at all like each other, their organization is based on the primary symbolic organization which has arisen in the domain of speech. Psychologically, therefore, they extend the communicative character of speech to situations in which for one reason or another speech is not possible.

In the more special class of communicative symbolism one cannot make a word-to-word translation, as it were, back to speech but can only paraphrase in speech the intent of the communication. Here belong such symbolic systems as wigwagging, the use of railroad lights, bugle calls in the army, and smoke signals. It is interesting to observe that, while they are late in developing in the history of society, they are very much less complex in structure than language itself. They are of value partly in helping out a situation where neither language nor some form of language transfer can be applied, partly where it is desired to encourage the automatic nature of the desired response. Thus, because language is extraordinarily rich in meaning, it sometimes becomes a little annoying or even dangerous to rely upon it where only a simple this or that, or yes or no, is expected to be the response.

The importance of extending the physical conditions allowing for communication is obvious. The railroad, the telegraph, the telephone, the radio, and the airplane are among the best examples. It is to be noted that such instruments as the railroad and the radio are not communicative in character as such; they become so only because they facilitate the presentation of types of stimuli which act as symbols of communication or which contain implications of communicative significance. Thus, a telephone is of no use unless the party at the other end understands the language of the person calling up. Again, the fact that a railroad runs me to a certain point is of no real communicative importance unless there are fixed bonds of interest which connect me with the inhabitants of the place. The failure to bear in mind these obvious points has tended to make some writers exaggerate the importance of the spread in modern times of such inventions as the railroad and the telephone.

The history of civilization has been marked by a progressive increase in the radius of communication. In a typically primitive society communication is reserved for the members of the tribe and, at best, a small number of surrounding tribes with whom relations are intermittent rather than continuous and who act as a kind of buffer between the significant psychological world—



the world of one's own tribal culture—and the great unknown or unreal that lies beyond. Today, in our own civilization, the appearance of a new fashion in Paris is linked by a series of rapid and necessary events with the appearance of the same fashion in such distant places as Berlin, London, New York, San Francisco, and Yokohama. The underlying reason for this remarkable change in the radius and rapidity of communication is the gradual diffusion of cultural traits, in other words, of meaningful cultural reactions. Among the various types of cultural diffusion that of language itself is of paramount importance. Secondary technical devices making for ease of communication are also, of course, of prime importance.

The multiplication of far-reaching techniques of communication has two important results. In the first place, it increases the sheer radius of communication, so that for certain purposes the whole civilized world is made the psychological equivalent of a primitive tribe. In the second place, it lessens the importance of mere geographical contiguity. Owing to the technical nature of these sophisticated communicative devices, parts of the world that are geographically remote may, in terms of behavior, be actually much closer to each other than adjoining regions, which, from the historical standpoint, are supposed to share a larger body of common understandings. This means, of course, a tendency to remap the world both sociologically and psychologically. Even now it is possible to say that the scattered "scientific world" is a social unity which has no clear-cut geographical location. Further, the world of urban understanding in America contrasts rather sharply with the rural world. The weakening of the geographical factor in social organization must in the long run profoundly modify our attitude toward the meaning of personal relations and of social classes and even of nationalities.

The increasing ease of communication is purchased at a price, for it is becoming increasingly difficult to keep an intended communication within the desired bounds. A humble example of this new problem is the inadvisability of making certain kinds of statement on the telephone. Another example is the insidious cheapening of literary and artistic values due to the foreseen and economically advantageous "widening of the appeal." All effects which demand a certain intimacy of understanding tend to become difficult and are therefore avoided. It is a question whether the obvious increase of overt communication is not constantly being corrected, as it were, by the creation of new obstacles to communication. The fear of being too easily understood may, in many cases, be more aptly defined as the fear of being understood by too many—so many, indeed, as to endanger the psychological reality of the image of the enlarged self confronting the not-self.

On the whole, however, it is rather the obstacles to communication that are felt as annoying or ominous. The most important of these obstacles in the modern world is undoubtedly the great diversity of language. The enormous amount of energy put into the task of translation implies a passionate desire to make as light of the language difficulty as possible. In the long run it seems almost unavoidable that the civilized world will adopt some one language of intercommunication, say English or Esperanto, which can be set aside for denotive purposes pure and simple.

## JOHAN HUIZINGA

THE cultural historian Johan Huizinga (1872–1945) early drew upon the humanist tradition of his native Netherlands as the source of his life philosophy. A student of classical and oriental languages, his studies in Sanskrit literature led to a doctoral dissertation on the drama in ancient India—the choice of subject itself a silent protest against the utilitarian orientation of late nineteenth-century education. In his writings and in his life he sought to recapture the spirit of the Renaissance “universal man.” He took all human activities, whose sum we may call civilization, as his province.

Huizinga’s historical studies are couched in antiutilitarian, anticausal terms. The reader who, in approaching his famous book *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (1919), for example, asks: What were the causes of the waning of the Middle Ages, and what political, economic, or social changes did it involve?—will find little satisfaction in Huizinga. He prefers to apprehend and express the unique quality of an age as revealed in its literature and art, in its manners and ritual, rather than to analyze it in terms of some overarching scheme of institutional development. His feeling for the concrete in human experience was related to his antisystematic bias. To look for uniformities or to reduce life to a few systematic generalizations was, for him, to deny the vitality of real events and to render barren the rich store of historical experience.

The central themes of Huizinga’s work and life are brought together within the unifying concept of “play” in his essay *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture*, finished in 1938, from which the following selection has been taken. In this essay Huizinga suggests that play, equally with work or with reason, is a source of that free human creativity which he regards as fundamental in the life of cultured man. Play is often treated as mere infantile diversion, but to Huizinga it is prerequisite to that humane inventiveness which nourishes and enriches the civilized community.

The present translation, from the German edition published in Switzerland in 1944, is by R. F. C. Hull.



## *HOMO LUDENS: A STUDY OF THE PLAY-ELEMENT IN CULTURE*

### CHAPTER I: NATURE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF PLAY AS A CULTURAL PHENOMENON

Play is older than culture, for culture, however adequately defined, always presupposes human society, and animals have not waited for man to teach them their playing. We can safely assert, even, that human civilization has added no essential feature to the general idea of play. Animals play just like men. We have only to watch young dogs to see that all the essentials of human play are present in their merry gambols. They invite one another to play by a certain ceremoniousness of attitude and gesture. They keep to the rule that you shall not bite, or not bite hard, your brother's ear. They pretend to get terribly angry. And—what is most important—in all these doings they plainly experience tremendous fun and enjoyment. Such rompings of young dogs are only one of the simpler forms of animal play. There are other, much more highly developed forms: regular contests and beautiful performances before an admiring public.

Here we have at once a very important point: even in its simplest forms on the animal level, play is more than a mere physiological phenomenon or a psychological reflex. It goes beyond the confines of purely physical or purely biological activity. It is a *significant* function—that is to say, there is some sense to it. In play there is something “at play” which transcends the immediate needs of life and imparts meaning to the action. All play means something. If we call the active principle that makes up the essence of play, “instinct,” we explain nothing; if we call it “mind” or “will” we say too much. However we may regard it, the very fact that play has a meaning implies a nonmaterialistic quality in the nature of the thing itself.

Psychology and physiology deal with the observation, description, and explanation of the play of animals, children, and grown-ups. They try to determine the nature and significance of play and to assign it its place in the scheme of life. The high importance of this place and the necessity, or at least the utility, of play as a function are generally taken for granted and form the starting-point of all such scientific researches. The numerous attempts to

---

This selection has been reprinted from Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture* (pp. 1-14, 20-21, 25-26, 199-213, Copyright 1949, Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., London) by permission of Roy Publishers, New York, holder of American permission rights.

define the biological function of play show a striking variation. By some the origin and fundamentals of play have been described as a discharge of superabundant vital energy, by others as the satisfaction of some "imitative instinct," or again as simply a "need" for relaxation. According to one theory play constitutes a training of the young creature for the serious work that life will demand later on. According to another it serves as an exercise in restraint needful to the individual. Some find the principle of play in an innate urge to exercise a certain faculty, or in the desire to dominate or compete. Yet others regard it as an "abreaction"—an outlet for harmful impulses, as the necessary restorer of energy wasted by one-sided activity, as "wish-fulfilment," as a fiction designed to keep up the feeling of personal value, etc.

All these hypotheses have one thing in common: they all start from the assumption that play must serve something which is not play, that it must have some kind of biological purpose. They all enquire into the why and the wherefore of play. The various answers they give tend rather to overlap than to exclude one another. It would be perfectly possible to accept nearly all the explanations without getting into any real confusion of thought—and without coming much nearer to a real understanding of the play-concept. They are all only partial solutions of the problem. If any of them were really decisive it ought either to exclude all the others or to comprehend them in a higher unity. Most of them only deal incidentally with the question of what play is *in itself* and what it means for the player. They attack play direct with the quantitative methods of experimental science without first paying attention to its profoundly aesthetic quality. As a rule they leave the primary quality of play as such, virtually untouched. To each and every one of the above "explanations" it might well be objected: "So far so good, but what actually is the *fun* of playing? Why does the baby crow with pleasure? Why does the gambler lose himself in his passion? Why is a huge crowd roused to frenzy by a football match?" This intensity of, and absorption in, play finds no explanation in biological analysis. Yet in this intensity, this absorption, this power of maddening, lies the very essence, the primordial quality of play. Nature, so our reasoning mind tells us, could just as easily have given her children all those useful functions of discharging superabundant energy, of relaxing after exertion, of training for the demands of life, of compensating for unfulfilled longings, etc., in the form of purely mechanical exercises and reactions. But no, she gave us play, with its tension, its mirth, and its fun.

Now this last-named element, the *fun* of playing, resists all analysis, all logical interpretation. As a concept, it cannot be reduced to any other mental category. No other modern language known to me has the exact equivalent



of the English "fun." The Dutch "aardigheid" perhaps comes nearest to it (derived from "aard" which means the same as "Art" and "Wesen"<sup>1</sup> in German, and thus evidence, perhaps, that the matter cannot be reduced further). We may note in passing that "fun" in its current usage is of rather recent origin. French, oddly enough, has no corresponding term at all; German half makes up for it by "Spas" and "Witz" together. Nevertheless it is precisely this fun-element that characterizes the essence of play. Here we have to do with an absolutely primary category of life, familiar to everybody at a glance right down to the animal level. We may well call play a "totality" in the modern sense of the word, and it is as a totality that we must try to understand and evaluate it.

Since the reality of play extends beyond the sphere of human life it cannot have its foundations in any rational nexus, because this would limit it to mankind. The incidence of play is not associated with any particular stage of civilization or view of the universe. Any thinking person can see at a glance that play is a thing on its own, even if his language possesses no general concept to express it. Play cannot be denied. You can deny, if you like, nearly all abstractions: justice, beauty, truth, goodness, mind, God. You can deny seriousness, but not play.

But in acknowledging play you acknowledge mind, for whatever else play is, it is not matter. Even in the animal world it bursts the bounds of the physically existent. From the point of view of a world wholly determined by the operation of blind forces, play would be altogether superfluous. Play only becomes possible, thinkable and understandable when an influx of *mind* breaks down the absolute determinism of the cosmos. The very existence of play continually confirms the supra-logical nature of the human situation. Animals play, so they must be more than merely mechanical things. We play and know that we play, so we must be more than merely rational beings, for play is irrational.

In tackling the problem of play as a function of culture proper and not as it appears in the life of the animal or the child, we begin where biology and psychology leave off. In culture we find play as a given magnitude existing before culture itself existed, accompanying it and pervading it from the earliest beginnings right up to the phase of civilization we are now living in. We find play present everywhere as a well-defined quality of action which is different from "ordinary" life. We can disregard the question of how far science has succeeded in reducing this quality to quantitative factors. In our

<sup>1</sup> Nature, kind, being, essence, etc.—Trans.

opinion it has not. At all events it is precisely this quality, itself so characteristic of the form of life we call "play," which matters. Play as a special form of activity, as a "significant form," as a social function—that is our subject. We shall not look for the natural impulses and habits conditioning play in general, but shall consider play in its manifold concrete forms as itself a social construction. We shall try to take play as the player himself takes it: in its primary significance. If we find that play is based on the manipulation of certain images, on a certain "imagination" of reality (i.e. its conversion into images), then our main concern will be to grasp the value and significance of these images and their "imagination." We shall observe their action in play itself and thus try to understand play as a cultural factor in life.

The great archetypal activities of human society are all permeated with play from the start. Take language, for instance—that first and supreme instrument which man shapes in order to communicate, to teach, to command. Language allows him to distinguish, to establish, to state things; in short, to name them and by naming them to raise them into the domain of the spirit. In the making of speech and language the spirit is continually "sparking" between matter and mind, as it were, playing with the wondrous nominative faculty. Behind every abstract expression there lie the boldest of metaphors, and every metaphor is a play upon words. Thus in giving expression to life man creates a second, poetic world alongside the world of nature.

Or take myth. This, too, is a transformation or an "imagination" of the outer world, only here the process is more elaborate and ornate than is the case with individual words. In myth, primitive man seeks to account for the world of phenomena by grounding it in the Divine. In all the wild imaginings of mythology a fanciful spirit is playing on the border-line between jest and earnest. Or finally, let us take ritual. Primitive society performs its sacred rites, its sacrifices, consecrations and mysteries, all of which serve to guarantee the well-being of the world, in a spirit of pure play truly understood.

Now in myth and ritual the great instinctive forces of civilized life have their origin: law and order, commerce and profit, craft and art, poetry, wisdom and science. All are rooted in the primæval soil of play.

The object of the present essay is to demonstrate that it is more than a rhetorical comparison to view culture *sub specie ludi*.<sup>2</sup> The thought is not at all new. There was a time when it was generally accepted, though in a limited sense quite different from the one intended here: in the 17th century, the age

<sup>2</sup> [Under the heading of play.]

of world theatre. Drama, in a glittering succession of figures ranging from Shakespeare and Calderon to Racine, then dominated the literature of the West. It was the fashion to liken the world to a stage on which every man plays his part. Does this mean that the play-element in civilization was openly acknowledged? Not at all. On closer examination this fashionable comparison of life to a stage proves to be little more than an echo of the Neoplatonism that was then in vogue, with a markedly moralistic accent. It was a variation on the ancient theme of the vanity of all things. The fact that play and culture are actually interwoven with one another was neither observed nor expressed, whereas for us the whole point is to show that genuine, pure play is one of the main bases of civilization.

To our way of thinking, play is the direct opposite of seriousness. At first sight this opposition seems as irreducible to other categories as the play-concept itself. Examined more closely, however, the contrast between play and seriousness proves to be neither conclusive nor fixed. We can say: play is non-seriousness. But apart from the fact that this proposition tells us nothing about the positive qualities of play, it is extraordinarily easy to refute. As soon as we proceed from "play is non-seriousness" to "play is not serious," the contrast leaves us in the lurch—for some play can be very serious indeed. Moreover we can immediately name several other fundamental categories that likewise come under the heading "non-seriousness" yet have no correspondence whatever with "play." Laughter, for instance, is in a sense the opposite of seriousness without being absolutely bound up with play. Children's games, football, and chess are played in profound seriousness; the players have not the slightest inclination to laugh. It is worth noting that the purely physiological act of laughing is exclusive to man, whilst the significant function of play is common to both men and animals. The Aristotelian *animal ridens*<sup>3</sup> characterizes man as distinct from the animal almost more absolutely than *homo sapiens*.

What is true of laughter is also true of the comic. The comic comes under the category of non-seriousness and has certain affinities with laughter—it provokes to laughter. But its relation to play is subsidiary. In itself play is not comical either for player or public. The play of young animals or small children may sometimes be ludicrous, but the sight of grown dogs chasing one another hardly moves us to laughter. When we call a farce or a comedy "comic," it is not so much on account of the play-acting as such as on account of the situation or the thoughts expressed. The mimic and laughter-

<sup>3</sup> [*Laughing animal.*]

provoking art of the clown is comic as well as ludicrous, but it can scarcely be termed genuine play.

The category of the comic is closely connected with *folly* in the highest and lowest sense of that word. Play, however, is not foolish. It lies outside the antithesis of wisdom and folly. The later Middle Ages tended to express the two cardinal moods of life—play and seriousness—somewhat imperfectly by opposing *folie* to *sense*, until Erasmus in his *Laus Stultitiae*<sup>4</sup> showed the inadequacy of the contrast.

All the terms in this loosely connected group of ideas—play, laughter, folly, wit, jest, joke, the comic, etc.—share the characteristic which we had to attribute to play, namely, that of resisting any attempt to reduce it to other terms. Their rationale and their mutual relationships must lie in a very deep layer of our mental being.

The more we try to mark off the form we call “play” from other forms apparently related to it, the more the absolute independence of the play-concept stands out. And the segregation of play from the domain of the great categorical antitheses does not stop there. Play lies outside the antithesis of wisdom and folly, and equally outside those of truth and falsehood, good and evil. Although it is a non-material activity it has no moral function. The valuations of vice and virtue do not apply here.

If, therefore, play cannot be directly referred to the categories of truth or goodness, can it be included perhaps in the realm of the aesthetic? Here our judgement wavers. For although the attribute of beauty does not attach to play as such, play nevertheless tends to assume marked elements of beauty. Mirth and grace adhere at the outset to the more primitive forms of play. In play the beauty of the human body in motion reaches its zenith. In its more developed forms it is saturated with rhythm and harmony, the noblest gifts of aesthetic perception known to man. Many and close are the links that connect play with beauty. All the same, we cannot say that beauty is inherent in play as such; so we must leave it at that: play is a function of the living, but is not susceptible of exact definition either logically, biologically, or aesthetically. The play-concept must always remain distinct from all the other forms of thought in which we express the structure of mental and social life. Hence we shall have to confine ourselves to describing the main characteristics of play.

Since our theme is the relation of play to culture we need not enter into all the possible forms of play but can restrict ourselves to its social manifestations. These we might call the higher forms of play. They are generally much

<sup>4</sup> [*The Praise of Folly*.]



easier to describe than the more primitive play of infants and young animals, because they are more distinct and articulate in form and their features more various and conspicuous, whereas in interpreting primitive play we immediately come up against that irreducible quality of pure playfulness which is not, in our opinion, amenable to further analysis. We shall have to speak of contests and races, of performances and exhibitions, of dancing and music, pageants, masquerades and tournaments. Some of the characteristics we shall enumerate are proper to play in general, others to social play in particular.

First and foremost, then, all play is a voluntary activity. Play to order is no longer play: it could at best be but a forcible imitation of it. By this quality of freedom alone, play marks itself off from the course of the natural process. It is something added thereto and spread out over it like a flowering, an ornament, a garment. Obviously, freedom must be understood here in the wider sense that leaves untouched the philosophical problem of determinism. It may be objected that this freedom does not exist for the animal and the child; they *must* play because their instinct drives them to it and because it serves to develop their bodily faculties and their powers of selection. The term "instinct," however, introduces an unknown quantity, and to presuppose the utility of play from the start is to be guilty of a *petitio principii*.<sup>5</sup> Child and animal play because they enjoy playing, and therein precisely lies their freedom.

Be that as it may, for the adult and responsible human being play is a function which he could equally well leave alone. Play is superfluous. The need for it is only urgent to the extent that the enjoyment of it makes it a need. Play can be deferred or suspended at any time. It is never imposed by physical necessity or moral duty. It is never a task. It is done at leisure, during "free time." Only when play is a recognized cultural function—a rite, a ceremony—is it bound up with notions of obligation and duty.

Here, then, we have the first main characteristic of play: that it is free, is in fact freedom. A second characteristic is closely connected with this, namely, that play is not "ordinary" or "real" life. It is rather a stepping out of "real" life into a temporary sphere of activity with a disposition all of its own. Every child knows perfectly well that he is "only pretending," or that it was "only for fun." How deep-seated this awareness is in the child's soul is strikingly illustrated by the following story, told to me by the father of the boy in question. He found his four-year-old son sitting at the front of a row of chairs, playing "trains." As he hugged him the boy said: "Don't kiss the

<sup>5</sup> [That is, question-begging.]



engine, Daddy, or the carriages won't think it's real." This "only pretending" quality of play betrays a consciousness of the inferiority of play compared with "seriousness," a feeling that seems to be something as primary as play itself. Nevertheless, as we have already pointed out, the consciousness of play being "only a pretend" does not by any means prevent it from proceeding with the utmost seriousness, with an absorption, a devotion that passes into rapture and, temporarily at least, completely abolishes that troublesome "only" feeling. Any game can at any time wholly run away with the players. The contrast between play and seriousness is always fluid. The inferiority of play is continually being offset by the corresponding superiority of its seriousness. Play turns to seriousness and seriousness to play. Play may rise to heights of beauty and sublimity that leave seriousness far beneath. Tricky questions such as these . . . come up for discussion when . . . [one examines] the relationship between play and ritual.

As regards its formal characteristics, all students lay stress on the *disinterestedness* of play. Not being "ordinary" life it stands outside the immediate satisfaction of wants and appetites, indeed it interrupts the appetitive process. It interpolates itself as a temporary activity satisfying in itself and ending there. Such at least is the way in which play presents itself to us in the first instance: as an intermezzo, an *interlude* in our daily lives. As a regularly occurring relaxation, however, it becomes the accompaniment, the complement, in fact an integral part of life in general. It adorns life, amplifies it, and is to that extent a necessity both for the individual—as a life function—and for society by reason of the meaning it contains, its significance, its expressive value, its spiritual and social associations, in short, as a culture function. The expression of it satisfies all kinds of communal ideals. It thus has its place in a sphere superior to the strictly biological processes of nutrition, reproduction and self-preservation. This assertion is apparently contradicted by the fact that play, or rather sexual display, is predominant in animal life precisely at the mating season. But would it be too absurd to assign a place *outside* the purely physiological, to the singing, cooing and strutting of birds just as we do to human play? In all its higher forms the latter at any rate always belongs to the sphere of festival and ritual—the sacred sphere.

Now, does the fact that play is a necessity, that it subserves culture, or indeed that it actually becomes culture, detract from its disinterested character? No, for the purposes it serves are external to immediate material interests or the individual satisfaction of biological needs. As a sacred activity play naturally contributes to the well-being of the group, but in quite another way and by other means than the acquisition of the necessities of life.

Play is distinct from "ordinary" life both as to locality and duration. This is the third main characteristic of play: its secludedness, its limitedness. It is "played out" within certain limits of time and place. It contains its own course and meaning.

Play begins, and then at a certain moment it is "over." It plays itself to an end. While it is in progress all is movement, change, alternation, succession, association, separation. But immediately connected with its limitation as to time there is a further curious feature of play: it at once assumes fixed form as a cultural phenomenon. Once played, it endures as a new-found creation of the mind, a treasure to be retained by the memory. It is transmitted, it becomes a tradition. It can be repeated at any time, whether it be "child's play" or a game of chess, or at fixed intervals like a mystery. In this faculty of repetition lies one of the most essential qualities of play. It holds good not only of play as a whole but also of its inner structure. In nearly all the higher forms of play the elements of repetition and alternation (as in the *refrain*), are like the warp and woof of a fabric.

More striking even than the limitation as to time is the limitation as to space. All play moves and has its being within a playground marked off beforehand either materially or ideally, deliberately or as a matter of course. Just as there is no formal difference between play and ritual, so the "consecrated spot" cannot be formally distinguished from the play-ground. The arena, the card-table, the magic circle, the temple, the stage, the screen, the tennis court, the court of justice, etc., are all in form and function playgrounds, i.e., forbidden spots, isolated, hedged round, hallowed, within which special rules obtain. All are temporary worlds within the ordinary world, dedicated to the performance of an act apart.

Inside the play-ground an absolute and peculiar order reigns. Here we come across another, very positive feature of play: it creates order, *is* order. Into an imperfect world and into the confusion of life it brings a temporary, a limited perfection. Play demands order absolute and supreme. The least deviation from it "spoils the game," robs it of its character and makes it worthless. The profound affinity between play and order is perhaps the reason why play, as we noted in passing, seems to lie to such a large extent in the field of aesthetics. Play has a tendency to be beautiful. It may be that this aesthetic factor is identical with the impulse to create orderly form, which animates play in all its aspects. The words we use to denote the elements of play belong for the most part to aesthetics, terms with which we try to describe the effects of beauty: tension, poise, balance, contrast, variation, solution, resolution, etc. Play casts a spell over us; it is "enchanted," "cap-

tivating." It is invested with the noblest qualities we are capable of perceiving in things: rhythm and harmony.

The element of tension in play to which we have just referred plays a particularly important part. Tension means uncertainty, chanciness; a striving to decide the issue and so end it. The player wants something to "go," to "come off"; he wants to "succeed" by his own exertions. Baby reaching for a toy, pussy patting a bobbin, a little girl playing ball—all want to achieve something difficult, to succeed, to end a tension. Play is "tense," as we say. It is this element of tension and solution that governs all solitary games of skill and application such as puzzles, jig-saws, mosaic-making, patience, target-shooting, and the more play bears the character of competition the more fervent it will be. In gambling and athletics it is at its height. Though play as such is outside the range of good and bad, the element of tension imparts to it a certain ethical value in so far as it means a testing of the player's prowess: his courage, tenacity, resources and, last but not least, his spiritual powers—his "fairness"; because, despite his ardent desire to win, he must stick to the rules of the game.

These rules in their turn are a very important factor in the play-concept. All play has its rules. They determine what "holds" in the temporary world circumscribed by play. The rules of a game are absolutely binding and allow no doubt. Paul Valéry once in passing gave expression to a very cogent thought when he said: "No scepticism is possible where the rules of the game are concerned, for the principle underlying them is an unshakable truth. . . ." Indeed, as soon as the rules are transgressed the whole play-world collapses. The game is over. The umpire's whistle breaks the spell and sets "real" life going again.

The player who trespasses against the rules or ignores them is a "spoil-sport." The spoil-sport is not the same as the false player, the cheat; for the latter pretends to be playing the game and, on the face of it, still acknowledges the magic circle. It is curious to note how much more lenient society is to the cheat than to the spoil-sport. This is because the spoil-sport shatters the play-world itself. By withdrawing from the game he reveals the relativity and fragility of the play-world in which he had temporarily shut himself with others. He robs play of its *illusion*—a pregnant word which means literally "in-play" (from *inlusio*, *illudere* or *inludere*). Therefore he must be cast out, for he threatens the existence of the play-community. The figure of the spoil-sport is most apparent in boys' games. The little community does not enquire whether the spoil-sport is guilty of defection because he dares not enter into the game or because he is not allowed to. Rather, it does not

recognize "not being allowed" and calls it "not daring." For it, the problem of obedience and conscience is no more than fear of punishment. The spoil-sport breaks the magic world, therefore he is a coward and must be ejected. In the world of high seriousness, too, the cheat and the hypocrite have always had an easier time of it than the spoil-sports, here called apostates, heretics, innovators, prophets, conscientious objectors, etc. It sometimes happens, however, that the spoil-sports in their turn make a new community with rules of its own. The outlaw, the revolutionary, the cabbalist or member of a secret society, indeed heretics of all kinds are of a highly associative if not sociable disposition, and a certain element of play is prominent in all their doings.

A play-community generally tends to become permanent even after the game is over. Of course, not every game of marbles or every bridge-party leads to the founding of a club. But the feeling of being "apart together" in an exceptional situation, of sharing something important, of mutually withdrawing from the rest of the world and rejecting the usual norms, retains its magic beyond the duration of the individual game. The club pertains to play as the hat to the head. It would be rash to explain all the associations which the anthropologist calls "phratría"—e.g., clans, brotherhoods, etc.—simply as play-communities; nevertheless it has been shown again and again how difficult it is to draw the line between, on the one hand, permanent social groupings—particularly in archaic cultures with their extremely important, solemn, indeed sacred customs—and the sphere of play on the other.

The exceptional and special position of play is most tellingly illustrated by the fact that it loves to surround itself with an air of secrecy. Even in early childhood the charm of play is enhanced by making a "secret" out of it. This is for *us*, not for the "others." What the "others" do "outside" is no concern of ours at the moment. Inside the circle of the game the laws and customs of ordinary life no longer count. We are different and do things differently. This temporary abolition of the ordinary world is fully acknowledged in child-life, but it is no less evident in the great ceremonial games of savage societies. During the great feast of initiation when the youths are accepted into the male community, it is not the neophytes only that are exempt from the ordinary laws and regulations: there is a truce to all feuds in the tribe. All retaliatory acts and vendettas are suspended. This temporary suspension of normal social life on account of the sacred play-season has numerous traces in the more advanced civilizations as well. Everything that pertains to saturnalia and carnival customs belongs to it. Even with us a bygone age of robuster private habits than ours, more marked class-privileges and a more complaisant police recognized the orgies of young men of rank under



the name of a "rag." The saturnalian licence of young men still survives, in fact, in the ragging at English universities, which the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines as "an extensive display of noisy and disorderly conduct carried out in defiance of authority and discipline."

The "differentness" and secrecy of play are most vividly expressed in "dressing up." Here the "extra-ordinary" nature of play reaches perfection. The disguised or masked individual "plays" another part, another being. He *is* another being. The terrors of childhood, open-hearted gaiety, mystic fantasy and sacred awe are all inextricably entangled in this strange business of masks and disguises.

Summing up the formal characteristics of play we might call it a free activity standing quite consciously outside "ordinary" life as being "not serious," but at the same time absorbing the player intensely and utterly. It is an activity connected with no material interest, and no profit can be gained by it. It proceeds within its own proper boundaries of time and space according to fixed rules and in an orderly manner. It promotes the formation of social groupings which tend to surround themselves with secrecy and to stress their difference from the common world by disguise or other means.

The function of play in the higher forms which concern us here can largely be derived from the two basic aspects under which we meet it: as a contest *for* something or a representation *of* something. These two functions can unite in such a way that the game "represents" a contest, or else becomes a contest for the best representation of something.

Representation means display, and this may simply consist in the exhibition of something naturally given, before an audience. The peacock and the turkey merely display their gorgeous plumage to the females, but the essential feature of it lies in the parading of something out of the ordinary and calculated to arouse admiration. If the bird accompanies this exhibition with dance-steps we have a performance, a *stepping out of* common reality into a higher order. We are ignorant of the bird's sensations while so engaged. We know, however, that in child-life performances of this kind are full of imagination. The child is *making an image* of something different, something more beautiful, or more sublime, or more dangerous than what he usually *is*. One is a Prince, or one is Daddy or a wicked witch or a tiger. The child is quite literally "beside himself" with delight, transported beyond himself to such an extent that he almost believes he actually is such and such a thing, without, however, wholly losing consciousness of "ordinary reality." His representation is not so much a sham-reality as a realization in appearance: "imagination" in the original sense of the word.

Passing now from children's games to the sacred performances in archaic culture we find that there is more of a mental element "at play" in the latter, though it is excessively difficult to define. The sacred performance is more than an actualization in appearance only, a sham reality; it is also more than a symbolical actualization—it is a mystical one. In it, something invisible and inactual takes beautiful, actual, holy form. The participants in the rite are convinced that the action actualizes and effects a definite beautification, brings about an order of things higher than that in which they customarily live. All the same this "actualization by representation" still retains the formal characteristics of play in every respect. It is played or performed within a play-ground that is literally "staked out," and played moreover as a feast, i.e. in mirth and freedom. A sacred space, a temporarily real world of its own, has been expressly hedged off for it. But with the end of the play its effect is not lost; rather it continues to shed its radiance on the ordinary world outside, a wholesome influence working security, order and prosperity for the whole community until the sacred play-season comes round again. . . .

Formally speaking, there is no distinction whatever between marking out a space for a sacred purpose and marking it out for purposes of sheer play. The turf, the tennis-court, the chess-board and pavement-hopsotch cannot formally be distinguished from the temple or the magic circle. The striking similarity between sacrificial rites all over the earth shows that such customs must be rooted in a very fundamental, an aboriginal layer of the human mind. As a rule people reduce this over-all congruity of cultural forms to some "reasonable," "logical" cause by explaining the need for isolation and seclusion as an anxiety to protect the consecrated individual from noxious influences—because, in his consecrated state, he is particularly exposed to the malign workings of ghosts, besides being himself a danger to his surroundings. Such an explanation puts intellection and utilitarian purpose at the beginning of the cultural process. . . . Even if we do not fall back here on the antiquated notion of a priestcraft inventing religion, we are still introducing a rationalistic element better avoided. If, on the other hand, we accept the essential and original identity of play and ritual we simply recognize the hallowed spot as a play-ground, and the misleading question of the "why and the wherefore" does not arise at all.

If ritual proves to be formally indistinguishable from play the question remains whether this resemblance goes further than the purely formal. It is surprising that anthropology and comparative religion have paid so little

attention to the problem of how far such sacred activities as proceed within the forms of play also proceed in the attitude and mood of play. . . .

Needless to say, the mental attitude in which a community performs and experiences its sacred rites is one of high and holy earnest. But let it be emphasized that genuine and spontaneous play can also be profoundly serious. The player can abandon himself body and soul to the game, and the consciousness of its being "merely" a game can be thrust into the background. The joy inextricably bound up with playing can turn not only into tension, but into elation. Frivolity and ecstasy are the twin poles between which play moves.

The play-mood is *labile* in its very nature. At any moment "ordinary life" may reassert its rights either by an impact from without, which interrupts the game, or by an offence against the rules, or else from within, by a collapse of the play spirit, a sobering, a disenchantment. . . .

So that the apparently quite simple question of what play really is, leads us deep into the problem of the nature and origin of religious concepts. As we all know, one of the most important basic ideas with which every student of comparative religion has to acquaint himself is the following. When a certain form of religion accepts a sacred identity between two things of a different order, say a human being and an animal, this relationship is not adequately expressed by calling it a "symbolical correspondence" as *we* conceive this. The identity, the essential oneness of the two goes far deeper than the correspondence between a substance and its symbolic image. It is a mystic unity. The one has *become* the other. In his magic dance the savage *is* a kangaroo. We must always be on our guard against the deficiencies and differences of our means of expression. In order to form any idea at all of the mental habits of the savage we are forced to give them in our terminology. Whether we will or not we are always transposing the savage's ideas of religion into the strictly logical modes of our own thought. We express the relationship between him and the animal he "identifies" himself with, as a "being" for him but a "playing" for us. He has taken on the "essence" of the kangaroo, says the savage: he is playing the kangaroo, say we. The savage, however, knows nothing of the conceptual distinctions between "being" and "playing"; he knows nothing of "identity," "image" or "symbol." Hence it remains an open question whether we do not come nearest to the mental attitude of the savage performing a ritual act, by adhering to this primary, universally understandable term "play." In play as we conceive it the distinction between belief and make-believe breaks down. The concept of play

merges quite naturally with that of holiness. Any Prelude of Bach, any line of tragedy proves it. By considering the whole sphere of so-called primitive culture as a play-sphere we pave the way to a more direct and more general understanding of its peculiarities than any meticulous psychological or sociological analysis would allow.

Primitive, or let us say, archaic ritual is thus sacred play, indispensable for the well-being of the community, fecund of cosmic insight and social development but always play in the sense Plato gave to it—an action accomplishing itself outside and above the necessities and seriousness of everyday life. In this sphere of sacred play the child and the poet are at home with the savage. His aesthetic sensibility has brought the modern man closer to this sphere than the “enlightened” man of the 18th century ever was. Think of the peculiar charm that the mask as an *objet d'art* has for the modern mind. People nowadays try to feel the essence of savage life. This kind of exoticism may sometimes be a little affected, but it goes a good deal deeper than the 18th century *engouement*<sup>6</sup> for Turks, “Chinamen” and Indians. Modern man is very sensitive to the far-off and the strange. Nothing helps him so much in his understanding of savage society as his feeling for masks and disguise. While ethnology has demonstrated their enormous social importance, they arouse in the educated layman and art-lover an immediate aesthetic emotion compounded of beauty, fright, and mystery. Even for the cultured adult of today the mask still retains something of its terrifying power, although no religious emotions are attached to it. The sight of the masked figure, as a purely aesthetic experience, carries us beyond “ordinary life” into a world where something other than daylight reigns; it carries us back into the world of the savage, the child and the poet, which is the world of play. . . .

#### CHAPTER XII: THE PLAY-ELEMENT IN CONTEMPORARY CIVILIZATION

. . . The attempt to assess the play-content in the confusion of modern life is bound to lead us to contradictory conclusions. In the case of sport we have an activity nominally known as play but raised to such a pitch of technical organization and scientific thoroughness that the real play-spirit is threatened with extinction. Over against this tendency to over-seriousness, however, there are other phenomena pointing in the opposite direction. Certain activities whose whole *raison d'être* lies in the field of material interest, and which had nothing of play about them in their initial stages, develop what we can only call play-forms as a secondary characteristic. Sport and

<sup>6</sup> [*Infatuation.*]



athletics showed us play stiffening into seriousness but still being felt as play; now we come to serious business degenerating into play but still being called serious. The two phenomena are linked by the strong agonistic habit which still holds universal sway, though in other forms than before.

The impetus given to this agonistic principle which seems to be carrying the world back in the direction of play derives, in the main, from external factors independent of culture proper—in a word, communications, which have made intercourse of every sort so extraordinarily easy for mankind as a whole. Technology, publicity and propaganda everywhere promote the competitive spirit and afford means of satisfying it on an unprecedented scale. Commercial competition does not, of course, belong to the immemorial sacred play-forms. It only appears when trade begins to create fields of activity within which each must try to surpass and outwit his neighbor. Commercial rivalry soon makes limiting rules imperative, namely the trading customs. It remained primitive in essence until quite late, only becoming really intensive with the advent of modern communications, propaganda and statistics. Naturally a certain play-element had entered into business competition at an early stage. Statistics stimulated it with an idea that had originally arisen in sporting life, the idea, namely, of trading records. A record, as the word shows, was once simply a memorandum, a note which the innkeeper scrawled on the walls of his inn to say that such and such a rider or traveller had been the first to arrive after covering so and so many miles. The statistics of trade and production could not fail to introduce a sporting element into economic life. In consequence, there is now a sporting side to almost every triumph of commerce or technology: the highest turnover, the biggest tonnage, the fastest crossing, the greatest altitude, etc. Here a purely ludic element has, for once, got the better of utilitarian considerations, since the experts inform us that smaller units—less monstrous steamers and aircraft, etc.—are more efficient in the long run. Business becomes play. This process goes so far that some of the great business concerns deliberately instil the play-spirit into their workers so as to step up production. The trend is now reversed: play becomes business. A captain of industry, on whom the Rotterdam Academy of Commerce had conferred an honorary degree, spoke as follows:

Ever since I first entered the business it has been a race between the technicians and the sales department. One tried to produce so much that the sales department would never be able to sell it; while the other tried to sell so much that the technicians would never be able to keep pace. This race has always continued: sometimes one is ahead, sometimes the other. Neither my brother nor myself has regarded the

business as a task, but always as a game, the spirit of which it has been our constant endeavour to implant into the younger staff.

These words must, of course, be taken with a grain of salt. Nevertheless there are numerous instances of big concerns forming their own Sports Societies and even engaging workers with a view not so much to their professional capacities as to their fitness for the football eleven. Once more the wheel turns.

It is less simple to fix the play-element in contemporary art than in contemporary trade . . . [although] a certain playfulness is by no means lacking in the process of creating and "producing" a work of art. This [is] . . . obvious enough in the arts of the Muses or "music" arts, where a strong play-element may be called fundamental, indeed, essential to them. In the plastic arts we . . . [find] that a play-sense . . . [is] bound up with all forms of decoration; in other words, that the play-function is especially operative where mind and hand move most freely. Over and above this it . . . [asserts] itself in the master-piece or show-piece expressly commissioned, the *tour de force*, the wager in skill or ability. The question that now arises is whether the play-element in art has grown stronger or weaker since the end of the 18th century.

A gradual process extending over many centuries has succeeded in de-functionalizing art and making it more and more a free and independent occupation for individuals called artists. One of the landmarks of this emancipation was the victory of framed canvases over panels and murals, likewise of prints over miniatures and illuminations. A similar shift from the social to the individual took place when the Renaissance saw the main task of the architect no longer in the building of churches and palaces but of dwelling-houses; not in splendid galleries but in drawing-rooms and bed-rooms. Art became more intimate, but also more isolated; it became an affair of the individual and his taste. In the same way chamber music and songs expressly designed for the satisfaction of personal aestheticisms began to surpass the more public forms of art both in importance and often in intensity of expression.

. . . Since the 18th century art, precisely because recognized as a cultural factor, has to all appearances lost rather than gained in playfulness. But is the net result a gain or a loss? One is tempted to feel . . . that it was a blessing for art to be largely unconscious of its high purport and the beauty it creates. When art becomes self-conscious, that is, conscious of its own grace, it is apt to lose something of its eternal child-like innocence.

From another angle, of course, we might say that the play-element in art

has been fortified by the very fact that the artist is held to be above the common run of mortals. As a superior being he claims a certain amount of veneration as his due. In order to savour his superiority to the full he will require a reverential public or a circle of kindred spirits, who will pour forth the requisite veneration more understandingly than the public at large with its empty phrases. A certain esotericism is as necessary for art to-day as it was of old. Now all esoterics presuppose a convention: we, the initiates, agree to take such and such a thing thus and thus, so we will understand it, so admire it. In other words, esoterics requires a play-community which shall steep itself in its own mystery. Wherever there is a catch-word ending in *-ism* we are hot on the tracks of a play-community. The modern apparatus of publicity with its puffy art-criticism, exhibitions and lectures is calculated to heighten the play-character of art.

It is a very different thing to try to determine the play-content of modern science, for it brings us up against a fundamental difficulty. In the case of art we took play as a primary datum of experience, a generally accepted quantity; but when it comes to science we are constantly being driven back on our definition of that quantity and having to question it afresh. If we apply to science our definition of play as an activity occurring within certain limits of space, time and meaning, according to fixed rules, we might arrive at the amazing and horrifying conclusion that all the branches of science and learning are so many forms of play because each of them is isolated within its own field and bounded by the strict rules of its own methodology. But if we stick to the full terms of our definition we can see at once that, for an activity to be called play, more is needed than limitations and rules. A game is time-bound, we said; it has no contact with any reality outside itself, and its performance is its own end. Further, it is sustained by the consciousness of being a pleasurable, even mirthful, relaxation from the strains of ordinary life. None of this is applicable to science. Science is not only perpetually seeking contact with reality by its usefulness, i.e. in the sense that it is *applied*, it is perpetually trying to establish a universally valid pattern of reality, i.e. as *pure* science. Its rules, unlike those of play, are not unchallengeable for all time. They are constantly being belied by experience and undergoing modification, whereas the rules of a game cannot be altered without spoiling the game itself.

The conclusion, therefore, that all science is merely a game can be discarded as a piece of wisdom too easily come by. But it is legitimate to enquire whether a science is not liable to indulge in play within the closed precincts of its own method. Thus, for instance, the scientist's continued penchant for

systems tends in the direction of play. Ancient science, lacking adequate foundation in empiricism, lost itself in a sterile systematization of all conceivable concepts and properties. Though observation and calculation act as a brake in this respect they do not altogether exclude a certain capriciousness in scientific activities. Even the most delicate experimental analysis can be, not indeed manipulated while actually in progress, but played in the interests of subsequent theory. True, the margin of play is always detected in the end, but this detection proves that it exists. Jurists have of old been reproached with similar manoeuvres. Philologists too are not altogether blameless in this respect, seeing that ever since the Old Testament and the Vedas they have delighted in perilous etymologies, a favourite game to this day for those whose curiosity outstrips their knowledge. And is it so certain that the new schools of psychology are not being led astray by the frivolous and facile use of Freudian terminology at the hands of competents and incompetents alike?

Apart from the possibility of the scientific worker or amateur juggling with his own method he may also be seduced into the paths of play by the competitive impulse proper. Though competition in science is less directly conditioned by economic factors than in art, the logical development of civilization which we call science is more inextricably bound up with dialectics than is the aesthetic. . . . Science, as some one has not unjustly said, is polemical. But it is a bad sign when the urge to forestall the other fellow in discovery or to annihilate him with a demonstration, looms too large in the work done. The genuine seeker after truth sets little store by triumphing over a rival.

By way of tentative conclusion we might say that modern science, so long as it adheres to the strict demands of accuracy and veracity, is far less liable to fall into play as we have defined it, than was the case in earlier times and right up to the Renaissance, when scientific thought and method showed unmistakable play-characteristics.

These few observations on the play-factor in modern art and science must suffice here, though much has been left unsaid. We are hastening to an end, and it only remains to consider the play-element in contemporary social life at large and especially in politics. But let us be on our guard against two misunderstandings from the start. Firstly, certain play-forms may be used consciously or unconsciously to cover up some social or political design. In this case we are not dealing with the eternal play-element . . . but with false play.



Secondly, and quite independently of this, it is always possible to come upon phenomena which, to a superficial eye, have all the appearance of play and might be taken for permanent play-tendencies, but are, in point of fact, nothing of the sort. Modern social life is being dominated to an ever-increasing extent by a quality that has something in common with play and yields the illusion of a strongly developed play-factor. This quality I have ventured to call by the name of Puerilism, as being the most appropriate appellation for that blend of adolescence and barbarity which has been rampant all over the world for the last two or three decades.

It would seem as if the mentality and conduct of the adolescent now reigned supreme over large areas of civilized life which has formerly been the province of responsible adults. The habits I have in mind are, in themselves, as old as the world; the difference lies in the place they now occupy in our civilization and the brutality with which they manifest themselves. Of these habits that of gregariousness is perhaps the strongest and most alarming. It results in puerilism of the lowest order: yells or other signs of greeting, the wearing of badges and sundry items of political haberdashery, walking in marching order or at a special pace and the whole rigmarole of collective voodoo and mumbo-jumbo. Closely akin to this, if at a slightly deeper psychological level, is the insatiable thirst for trivial recreation and crude sensationalism, the delight in mass-meetings, mass-demonstrations, parades, etc. The club is a very ancient institution, but it is disaster when whole nations turn into clubs, for these, besides promoting the precious qualities of friendship and loyalty, are also hotbeds of sectarianism, intolerance, suspicion, superciliousness and quick to defend any illusion that flatters self-love or group-consciousness. We have seen great nations losing every shred of honour, all sense of humour, the very idea of decency and fair play. This is not the place to investigate the causes, growth and extent of this world-wide bastardization of culture; the entry of half-educated masses into the international traffic of the mind, the relaxation of morals and the hypertrophy of technics undoubtedly play a large part.

One example of official puerilism must suffice here. It is, as we know from history, a sign of revolutionary enthusiasm when governments play at ninepins with names, the venerable names of cities, persons, institutions, the calendar, etc. *Pravda* reported that as a result of their arrears in grain deliveries three *kolkhozy*<sup>7</sup> in the district of Kursk, already christened Budenny, Krupskaya and the equivalent of Red Cornfield, have been re-christened

<sup>7</sup> [Collective farms.]

Sluggard, Saboteur and Do-Nothing by the local soviet. Though this *trop de zèle*<sup>8</sup> received an official rebuff from the Central Committee and the offensive sobriquets were withdrawn, the puerilistic attitude could not have been more clearly expressed.

Very different is the great innovation of the late Lord Baden-Powell. His aim was to organize the social force of boyhood as such and turn it to good account. This is not puerilism, for it rests on a deep understanding of the mind and aptitudes of the immature; also the Scout Movement expressly styles itself a game. Here, if anywhere, we have an example of a game that comes as close to the culture-creating play of archaic times as our age allows. But when Boy-Scoutism in degraded form seeps through into politics we may well ask whether the puerilism that flourishes in present-day society is a play-function or not. At first sight the answer appears to be a definite yes, and such has been my interpretation of the phenomenon in other studies. I have now come to a different conclusion. According to our definition of play, puerilism is to be distinguished from playfulness. A child playing is not puerile in the pejorative sense we mean here. And if our modern puerilism were genuine play we ought to see civilization returning to the great archaic forms of recreation where ritual, style and dignity are in perfect unison. The spectacle of a society rapidly goose-stepping into helotry is, for some, the dawn of the millennium. We believe them to be in error.

More and more the sad conclusion forces itself upon us that the play-element in culture has been on the wane ever since the 18th century, when it was in full flower. Civilization to-day is no longer played, and even where it still seems to play it is false play—I had almost said, it plays false, so that it becomes increasingly difficult to tell where play ends and non-play begins. This is particularly true of politics. Not very long ago political life in parliamentary democratic form was full of unmistakable play-features. One of my pupils has recently worked up my observations on this subject into a thesis on parliamentary eloquence in France and England, showing how, ever since the end of the 18th century, debates in the House of Commons have been conducted very largely according to the rules of a game and in the true play-spirit. Personal rivalries are always at work, keeping up a continual match between the players whose object is to checkmate one another, but without prejudice to the interests of the country which they serve with all seriousness. The mood and manners of parliamentary democracy were, until recently, those of fair play both in England and in the countries that

<sup>8</sup> [*Excess of zeal.*]

had adopted the English model with some felicity. The spirit of fellowship would allow the bitterest opponents a friendly chat even after the most virulent debate. It was in this style that the "Gentleman's Agreement" arose. Unhappily certain parties to it were not always aware of the duties implicit in the word gentleman. There can be no doubt that it is just this play-element that keeps parliamentary life healthy, at least in Great Britain, despite the abuse that has lately been heaped upon it. The elasticity of human relationships underlying the political machinery permits it to "play," thus easing tensions which would otherwise be unendurable or dangerous—for it is the decay of humour that kills. We need hardly add that this play-factor is present in the whole apparatus of elections.

In American politics it is even more evident. Long before the two-party system had reduced itself to two gigantic teams whose political differences were hardly discernible to an outsider, electioneering in America had developed into a kind of national sport. The presidential election of 1840 set the pace for all subsequent elections. The party then calling itself Whig had an excellent candidate, General Harrison of 1812 fame, but no platform. Fortune gave them something infinitely better, a symbol on which they rode to triumph: the log cabin which was the old warrior's modest abode during his retirement. Nomination by majority vote, i.e. by the loudest clamour, was inaugurated in the election of 1860 which brought Lincoln to power. The emotionality of American politics lies deep in the origins of the American nation itself: Americans have ever remained true to the rough and tumble of pioneer life. There is a great deal that is endearing in American politics, something naïve and spontaneous for which we look in vain in the dragoonings and drillings, or worse, of the contemporary European scene.

Though there may be abundant traces of play in domestic politics there would seem, at first sight, to be little opportunity for it in the field of international relationships. The fact, however, that these have touched the nadir of violence and precariousness does not in itself exclude the possibility of play. As we have seen from numerous examples, play can be cruel and bloody and, in addition, can often be false play. Any law-abiding community or community of States will have characteristics linking it in one way or another to a play-community. International law between States is maintained by the mutual recognition of certain principles which, in effect, operate like play-rules despite the fact that they may be founded in metaphysics. Were it otherwise there would be no need to lay down the *pacta sunt servanda*<sup>9</sup> principle,

<sup>9</sup> [*Contracts will be obeyed.*]

which explicitly recognizes that the integrity of the system rests on a general willingness to keep to the rules. The moment that one or the other party withdraws from this tacit agreement the whole system of international law must, if only temporarily, collapse unless the remaining parties are strong enough to outlaw the "spoil-sport."

The maintenance of international law has, at all stages, depended very largely on principles lying outside the strict domain of law, such as honour, decency, and good form. It is not altogether in vain that the European rules of warfare developed out of the code of honour proper to chivalry. International law tacitly assumes that a beaten Power would behave like a gentleman and a good loser, which unhappily it seldom did. It was a point of international decorum to declare your war officially before entering upon it, though the aggressor often neglected to comply with this awkward convention and began by seizing some outlying colony or the like. But it is true to say that until quite recently war was conceived as a noble game—the sport of kings—and that the absolutely binding character of its rules rested on, and still retained, some of the formal play-elements we found in full flower in archaic warfare.

A cant phrase in current German political literature speaks of the change from peace to war as "das Eintreten des Ernstfalles"—roughly, "the serious development of an emergency." In strictly military parlance, of course, the term is correct. Compared with the sham fighting of manoeuvres and drilling and training, real war is undoubtedly what seriousness is to play. But German political theorists mean something more. The term "Ernstfall" avows quite openly that foreign policy has not attained its full degree of seriousness, has not achieved its object or proved its efficiency, until the stage of actual hostilities is reached. The true relation between States is one of war. All diplomatic intercourse, insofar as it moves in the paths of negotiation and agreement, is only a prelude to war or an interlude between two wars. This horrible creed is accepted and indeed professed by many. It is only logical that its adherents, who regard war and the preparations for it as the sole form of serious politics, should deny that war has any connection with the contest and hence with play. The agonistic factor, they tell us, may have been operative in the primitive stages of civilization, it was all very well then, but war nowadays is far above the competitiveness of mere savages. It is based on the "friend-foe principle." All "real" relationships between nations and States, so they say, are dominated by this ineluctable principle. Any "other" group is always either your friend or your enemy. Enemy, of course, is not to be understood as *inimicus* . . . , i.e. a person you hate, let alone a wicked person, but



purely and simply as *hostis* . . . , i.e. the stranger or foreigner who is in your group's way. The theory refuses to regard the enemy even as a rival or adversary. He is merely in your way and is thus to be made away with. If ever anything in history has corresponded to this gross over-simplification of the idea of enmity, which reduces it to an almost mechanical relationship, it is precisely that primitive antagonism between phratries, clans or tribes where, as we saw, the play-element was hypertrophied and distorted. Civilization is supposed to have carried us beyond this stage. I know of no sadder or deeper fall from human reason than Schmitt's barbarous and pathetic delusion about the friend-foe principle. His inhuman cerebrations do not even hold water as a piece of formal logic. For it is not war that is serious, but peace. War and everything to do with it remains fast in the daemonic and magical bonds of play. Only by transcending that pitiable friend-foe relationship will mankind enter into the dignity of man's estate. Schmitt's brand of "seriousness" merely takes us back to the savage level.

Here the bewildering antithesis of play and seriousness presents itself once more. We have gradually become convinced that civilization is rooted in noble play and that, if it is to unfold in full dignity and style, it cannot afford to neglect the play-element. The observance of play-rules is nowhere more imperative than in the relations between countries and States. Once they are broken, society falls into barbarism and chaos. On the other hand we cannot deny that modern warfare has lapsed into the old agonistic attitude of playing at war for the sake of prestige and glory.

Now this is our difficulty: modern warfare has, on the face of it, lost all contact with play. States of the highest cultural pretensions withdraw from the comity of nations and shamelessly announce that "*pacta non sunt servanda*." By doing so they break the play-rules inherent in any system of international law. To that extent their playing at war, as we have called it, for the sake of prestige is not true play; it, so to speak, plays the play-concept of war false. In contemporary politics, based as they are on the utmost preparedness if not actual preparation for war, there would seem to be hardly any trace of the old play-attitude. The code of honour is flouted, the rules of the game are set aside, international law is broken, and all the ancient associations of war with ritual and religion are gone. Nevertheless the methods by which war-policies are conducted and war-preparations carried out still show abundant traces of the agonistic attitude as found in primitive society. Politics are and have always been something of a game of chance; we have only to think of the challenges, the provocations, the threats and denunciations to realize that war and the policies leading up to it are always, in the nature of things, a

gamble, as Neville Chamberlain said in the first days of September 1939. Despite appearances to the contrary, therefore, war has not freed itself from the magic circle of play.

Does this mean that war is still a game, even for the aggressed, the persecuted, those who fight for their rights and their liberty? Here our gnawing doubt whether war is really play or earnest finds unequivocal answer. It is the *moral* content of an action that makes it serious. When the combat has an ethical value it ceases to be play. The way out of this vexing dilemma is only closed to those who deny the objective value and validity of ethical standards. Carl Schmitt's acceptance of the formula that war is the "serious development of an emergency" is therefore correct—but in a very different sense from that which he intended. His point of view is that of the aggressor who is not bound by ethical considerations. The fact remains that politics and war are deeply rooted in the primitive soil of culture played in and as contest. Only through an ethos that transcends the friend-foe relationship and recognizes a higher goal than the gratification of the self, the group or the nation will a political society pass beyond the "play" of war to true seriousness.

So that by a devious route we have reached the following conclusion: real civilization cannot exist in the absence of a certain play-element, for civilization presupposes limitation and mastery of the self, the ability not to confuse its own tendencies with the ultimate and highest goal, but to understand that it is enclosed within certain bounds freely accepted. Civilization will, in a sense, always be played according to certain rules, and true civilization will always demand fair play. Fair play is nothing less than good faith expressed in play terms. Hence the cheat or the spoil-sport shatters civilization itself. To be a sound culture-creating force this play-element must be pure. It must not consist in the darkening or debasing of standards set up by reason, faith or humanity. It must not be a false seeming, a masking of political purposes behind the illusion of genuine play-forms. True play knows no propaganda; its aim is in itself, and its familiar spirit is happy inspiration.

In treating of our theme so far we have tried to keep to a play-concept which starts from the positive and generally recognized characteristics of play. We took play in its immediate everyday sense and tried to avoid the philosophical short-circuit that would assert all human action to be play. Now at the end of our argument, this point of view awaits us and demands to be taken into account.

"Child's play was what he called all human opinions," says late Greek tradition of Heraclitus. As a pendant to this lapidary saying let us quote . . . the

profound words of Plato . . . : "Though human affairs are not worthy of great seriousness it is yet necessary to be serious; happiness is another thing. . . . I say that a man must be serious with the serious, and not the other way about. God alone is worthy of supreme seriousness, but man is made God's plaything, and that is the best part of him. Therefore every man and woman should live life accordingly, and play the noblest games, and be of another mind from what they are at present. For they deem war a serious thing, though in war there is neither play nor culture worthy the name, which are the things *we* deem most serious. Hence all must live in peace as well as they possibly can. What, then, is the right way of living? Life must be lived as play, playing certain games, making sacrifices, singing and dancing, and then a man will be able to propitiate the gods, and defend himself against his enemies, and win in the contest." Thus "men will live according to Nature since in most respects they are puppets, yet having a small part in truth." To which Plato's companion rejoins: "You make humanity wholly bad for us, friend, if you say that." And Plato answers: "Forgive me. It was with my eyes on God and moved by Him that I spoke so. If you like, then, humanity is not wholly bad, but worthy of some consideration."

The human mind can only disengage itself from the magic circle of play by turning towards the ultimate. Logical thinking does not go far enough. Surveying all the treasures of the mind and all the splendours of its achievements we shall still find, at the bottom of every serious judgment, something problematical left. In our heart of hearts we know that none of our pronouncements is absolutely conclusive. At that point, where our judgment begins to waver, the feeling that the world is serious after all wavers with it. Instead of the old saw: "All is vanity," the more positive conclusion forces itself upon us that "all is play." A cheap metaphor, no doubt, mere impotence of the mind; yet it is the wisdom Plato arrived at when he called man the plaything of the gods. In singular imagery the thought comes back again in the *Book of Proverbs*, where Wisdom says: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his ways, before he made any thing from the beginning. I was set up from eternity, and of old before the earth was made . . . I was with him forming all things: and was delighted every day, playing before him at all times; playing in the world. And my delights were to be with the children of men."

Whenever we are seized with vertigo at the ceaseless shuttlings and spinings in our mind of the thought: What is play? What is serious? we shall find the fixed, unmoving point that logic denies us, once more in the sphere of ethics. Play, we began by saying, lies outside morals. In itself it is neither good nor bad. But if we have to decide whether an action to which our will

impels us is a serious duty or is licit as play, our moral conscience will at once provide the touchstone. As soon as truth and justice, compassion and forgiveness have part in our resolve to act, our anxious question loses all meaning. One drop of pity is enough to lift our doing beyond intellectual distinctions. Springing as it does from a belief in justice and divine grace, conscience, which is moral awareness, will always overwhelm the question that eludes and deludes us to the end, in a lasting silence.



## MAN, MIND, AND CULTURE

### 3. CULTURE: ITS DIVERSITIES AND UNIFORMITIES



## RUTH BENEDICT

WHEN in daily speech we refer to a tribal or national culture—the Apache, the ancient Greek, the French, or perhaps to “the American way of life”—a ready-made cluster of traits generally leaps to mind. That there exist contradictory images of most cultures (the mellow, beer-drinking and the brutal, militaristic “German”; the proud, stoical and the sneaky, treacherous “Indian”) does not impair the occasional value of national stereotypes. During the past century and a half, with the intensification of national historical consciousness in the Western world, the attempt to define unique configurations of culture traits, and to identify within them a national “spirit” or “soul,” has been undertaken at a far more sophisticated level. To this end historians, philosophers, and art and literary critics have contributed their special talents. That anthropologists, too, should investigate the “culture-pattern” approach was inevitable. For, unlike evolutionism, it promises an apprehension of the unique flavor and animus of a given culture; and, unlike functionalism (with which it has common points of departure), it promises a view which is synthetic and unified rather than analytic and additive.

The most widely read American anthropological study of cultural configurations is Ruth Benedict's *Patterns of Culture* (1934). Benedict, who died in 1948 at the age of sixty-one while professor of anthropology at Columbia University, was by avocation a poet and had special sensibilities for the culture-pattern approach. Drawing upon her own observations of the Zuñi of New Mexico and upon other anthropologists' accounts of the Dobu of Melanesia and the Kwakiutl of western Canada, Benedict depicts these peoples as three distinctive, incommensurable cultural types, which she elaborates with insights drawn from clinical psychology, literature, and philosophy. The Zuñi, she claims, are modest, affable, cooperative, placid, and therefore “Apollonian”; the Dobu are fierce, contentious, treacherous, suspicious, possessive; the Kwakiutl are adventurous, proud, passionate, acquisitive, competitive, and therefore “Dionysian.” For a more loosely knit society, she admits, such as an industrial democracy, a plurality of characterizations must be acknowledged.

As the following selection indicates, the central concern of *Patterns of Culture* is not methodological, but the aesthetic one of sympathetic response to the spirit of an alien culture and the ethical one of asserting the relativity of any set of cultural standards. In the latter connection it is striking that, in the very act of declaring that a culture must be judged by its own internal norms, Benedict implies some cultures to be more congenial to her than others. When, however, she speaks of rivalry as “notoriously wasteful” and ranking “low in the scale of human values,” when she suggests it as desirable for *any* society to attempt “a self-conscious direction of the process by which its new normalities are created in the next generation,” she is not betraying her commitment to cultural relativism, but treating that concept

as a threshold to broader moral issues, which she herself addresses only by indirection.

Some social scientists criticize Benedict for omissions and distortions in her accounts of primitive peoples, even of the Zuñi, whom she knew at first hand. More fundamentally, they ask how her descriptions of culture patterns, even were they empirically accurate, contribute to a knowledge of cultural regularities. If each culture has a private impetus and personality, what are the prospects for a science of culture in general? The answer to this question is of course another. What is meant by "understanding" a culture? Is it the act of reduction to formula, or the act of empathy and appreciation? Consideration of these questions leads to a study of basic methodology in the social sciences.



## PATTERNS OF CULTURE

### CHAPTER II: THE DIVERSITY OF CULTURES

A chief of the Digger Indians, as the Californians call them, talked to me a great deal about the ways of his people in the old days. He was a Christian and a leader among his people in the planting of peaches and apricots on irrigated land, but when he talked of the shamans who had transformed themselves into bears before his eyes in the bear dance, his hands trembled and his voice broke with excitement. It was an incomparable thing, the power his people had had in the old days. He liked best to talk of the desert foods they had eaten. He brought each uprooted plant lovingly and with an unflinching sense of its importance. In those days his people had eaten "the health of the desert," he said, and knew nothing of the insides of tin cans and the things for sale at butcher shops. It was such innovations that had degraded them in these latter days.

One day, without transition, Ramon broke in upon his descriptions of grinding mesquite and preparing acorn soup. "In the beginning," he said, "God gave to every people a cup, a cup of clay, and from this cup they drank their life." I do not know whether the figure occurred in some traditional ritual of his people that I never found, or whether it was his own imagery. It is hard to imagine that he had heard it from the whites he had known at Banning; they were not given to discussing the ethos of different peoples. At any rate, in the mind of this humble Indian the figure of speech was clear

---

This selection is from Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture* (pp. 21-56. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1934), reprinted by permission of and arrangement with Houghton Mifflin Company, the authorized publishers.



and full of meaning. "They all dipped in the water," he continued, "but their cups were different. Our cup is broken now. It has passed away."

*Our cup is broken.* These things that had given significance to the life of his people, the domestic rituals of eating, the obligations of the economic system, the succession of ceremonials in the villages, possession in the bear dance, their standards of right and wrong—these were gone, and with them the shape and meaning of their life. The old man was still vigorous and a leader in relationships with the whites. He did not mean that there was any question of the extinction of his people. But he had in mind the loss of something that had value equal to that of life itself, the whole fabric of his people's standards and beliefs. There were other cups of living left, and they held perhaps the same water, but the loss was irreparable. It was no matter of tinkering with an addition here, lopping off something there. The modelling had been fundamental, it was somehow all of a piece. It had been their own.

Ramon had had personal experience of the matter of which he spoke. He straddled two cultures whose values and ways of thought were incommensurable. It is a hard fate. In Western civilization our experiences have been different. We are bred to one cosmopolitan culture, and our social sciences, our psychology, and our theology persistently ignore the truth expressed in Ramon's figure.

The course of life and the pressure of environment, not to speak of the fertility of human imagination, provide an incredible number of possible leads, all of which, it appears, may serve a society to live by. There are the schemes of ownership, with the social hierarchy that may be associated with possessions; there are material things and their elaborate technology; there are all the facts of sex life, parenthood and post-parenthood; there are the guilds or cults which may give structure to the society; there is economic exchange; there are the gods and supernatural sanctions. Each one of these and many more may be followed out with a cultural and ceremonial elaboration which monopolizes the cultural energy and leaves small surplus for the building of other traits. Aspects of life that seem to us most important have been passed over with small regard by peoples whose culture, oriented in another direction, has been far from poor. Or the same trait may be so greatly elaborated that we reckon it as fantastic.

It is in cultural life as it is in speech; selection is the prime necessity. The numbers of sounds that can be produced by our vocal cords and our oral and nasal cavities are practically unlimited. The three or four dozen of the English language are a selection which coincides not even with those of such closely related dialects as German and French. The total that are used in

different languages of the world no one has ever dared to estimate. But each language must make its selection and abide by it on pain of not being intelligible at all. A language that used even a few hundreds of the possible—and actually recorded—phonetic elements could not be used for communication. On the other hand a great deal of our misunderstanding of languages unrelated to our own has arisen from our attempts to refer alien phonetic systems back to ours as a point of reference. We recognize only one *k*. If other people have five *k* sounds placed in different positions in the throat and mouth, distinctions of vocabulary and of syntax that depend on these differences are impossible to us until we master them. We have a *d* and an *n*. They may have an intermediate sound which, if we fail to identify it, we write now *d* and now *n*, introducing distinctions which do not exist. The elementary prerequisite of linguistic analysis is a consciousness of these incredibly numerous available sounds from which each language makes its own selections.

In culture too we must imagine a great arc on which are ranged the possible interests provided either by the human age-cycle or by the environment or by man's various activities. A culture that capitalized even a considerable proportion of these would be as unintelligible as a language that used all the clicks, all the glottal stops, all the labials, dentals, sibilants, and gutturals from voiceless to voiced and from oral to nasal. Its identity as a culture depends upon the selection of some segments of this arc. Every human society everywhere has made such selection in its cultural institutions. Each from the point of view of another ignores fundamentals and exploits irrelevancies. One culture hardly recognizes monetary values; another has made them fundamental in every field of behaviour. In one society technology is unbelievably slighted even in those aspects of life which seem necessary to ensure survival; in another, equally simple, technological achievements are complex and fitted with admirable nicety to the situation. One builds an enormous cultural superstructure upon adolescence, one upon death, one upon after-life.

The case of adolescence is particularly interesting, because it is in the limelight in our own civilization and because we have plentiful information from other cultures. In our own civilization a whole library of psychological studies has emphasized the inevitable unrest of the period of puberty. It is in our tradition a physiological state as definitely characterized by domestic explosions and rebellion as typhoid is marked by fever. There is no question of the facts. They are common in America. The question is rather of their inevitability.

The most casual survey of the ways in which different societies have

handled adolescence makes one fact inescapable: even in those cultures which have made most of the trait, the age upon which they focus their attention varies over a great range of years. At the outset, therefore, it is clear that the so-called puberty institutions are a misnomer if we continue to think of biological puberty. The puberty they recognize is social, and the ceremonies are a recognition in some fashion or other of the child's new status of adulthood. This investiture with new occupations and obligations is in consequence as various and as culturally conditioned as the occupations and obligations themselves. If the sole honourable duty of manhood is conceived to be deeds of war, the investiture of the warrior is later and of a different sort from that in a society where adulthood gives chiefly the privilege of dancing in a representation of masked gods. In order to understand puberty institutions, we do not most need analyses of the necessary nature of *rites de passage*; <sup>1</sup> we need rather to know what is identified in different cultures with the beginning of adulthood and their methods of admitting to the new status. Not biological puberty, but what adulthood means in that culture conditions the puberty ceremony.

Adulthood in central North America means warfare. Honour in it is the great goal of all men. The constantly recurring theme of the youth's coming-of-age, as also of preparation for the warpath at any age, is a magic ritual for success in war. They torture not one another, but themselves: they cut strips of skin from their arms and legs, they strike off their fingers, they drag heavy weights pinned to their chest or leg muscles. Their reward is enhanced prowess in deeds of warfare.

In Australia, on the other hand, adulthood means participation in an exclusively male cult whose fundamental trait is the exclusion of women. Any woman is put to death if she so much as hears the sound of the bull-roarer at the ceremonies, and she must never know of the rites. Puberty ceremonies are elaborate and symbolic repudiations of the bonds with the female sex; the men are symbolically made self-sufficient and the wholly responsible element of the community. To attain this end they use drastic sexual rites and bestow supernatural guaranties.

The clear physiological facts of adolescence, therefore, are first socially interpreted even where they are stressed. But a survey of puberty institutions makes clear a further fact: puberty is physiologically a different matter in the life-cycle of the male and the female. If cultural emphasis followed the physiological emphasis, girls' ceremonies would be more marked than boys'; but it is not so. The ceremonies emphasize a social fact: the adult prerogatives of

<sup>1</sup> [Ceremonies connected with the initiation of the child into adulthood.]

men are more far-reaching in every culture than women's, and consequently, as in the above instances, it is more common for societies to take note of this period in boys than in girls.

Girls' and boys' puberty, however, may be socially celebrated in the same tribe in identical ways. Where, as in the interior of British Columbia, adolescent rites are a magical training for all occupations, girls are included on the same terms as boys. Boys roll stones down mountains and beat them to the bottom to be swift of foot, or throw gambling-sticks to be lucky in gambling; girls carry water from distant springs, or drop stones down inside their dresses that their children may be born as easily as the pebble drops to the ground.

In such a tribe as the Nandi of the lake region of East Africa, also, girls and boys share an even-handed puberty rite, though, because of the man's dominant role in the culture, his boyhood training period is more stressed than the woman's. Here adolescent rites are an ordeal inflicted by those already admitted to adult status upon those they are now forced to admit. They require of them the most complete stoicism in the face of ingenious tortures associated with circumcision. The rites for the two sexes are separate, but they follow the same pattern. In both the novices wear for the ceremony the clothing of their sweethearts. During the operation their faces are watched for any twinge of pain, and the reward of bravery is given with great rejoicing by the lover, who runs forward to receive back some of his adornments. For both the girl and the boy the rites mark their *entrée* into a new sex status: the boy is now a warrior and may take a sweetheart, the girl is marriageable. The adolescent tests are for both a premarital ordeal in which the palm is awarded by their lovers.

Puberty rites may also be built upon the facts of girls' puberty and admit of no extension to boys. One of the most naïve of these is the institution of the fatting-house for girls in Central Africa. In the region where feminine beauty is all but identified with obesity, the girl at puberty is segregated, sometimes for years, fed with sweet and fatty foods, allowed no activity, and her body rubbed assiduously with oils. She is taught during this time her future duties, and her seclusion ends with a parade of her corpulence that is followed by her marriage to her proud bridegroom. It is not regarded as necessary for the man to achieve pulchritude before marriage in a similar fashion.

The usual ideas around which girls' puberty institutions are centered, and which are not readily extended to boys', are those concerned with menstruation. The uncleanness of the menstruating woman is a very widespread idea,



and in a few regions first menstruation has been made the focus of all the associated attitudes. Puberty rites in these cases are of a thoroughly different character from any of which we have spoken. Among the Carrier Indians of British Columbia, the fear and horror of a girl's puberty was at its height. Her three or four years of seclusion was called "the burying alive," and she lived for all that time alone in the wilderness, in a hut of branches far from all beaten trails. She was a threat to any person who might so much as catch a glimpse of her, and her mere footstep defiled a path or a river. She was covered with a great headdress of tanned skin that shrouded her face and breasts and fell to the ground behind. Her arms and legs were loaded with sinew bands to protect her from the evil spirit with which she was filled. She was herself in danger and she was a source of danger to everybody else.

Girls' puberty ceremonies built upon ideas associated with the menses are readily convertible into what is, from the point of view of the individual concerned, exactly opposite behaviour. There are always two possible aspects to the sacred: it may be a source of peril or it may be a source of blessing. In some tribes the first menses of girls are a potent supernatural blessing. Among the Apaches I have seen the priests themselves pass on their knees before the row of solemn little girls to receive from them the blessing of their touch. All the babies and the old people come also of necessity to have illness removed from them. The adolescent girls are not segregated as sources of danger, but court is paid to them as to direct sources of supernatural blessing. Since the ideas that underlie puberty rites for girls, both among the Carrier and among the Apache, are founded on beliefs concerning menstruation, they are not extended to boys, and boys' puberty is marked instead, and lightly, with simple tests and proofs of manhood.

The adolescent behaviour, therefore, even of girls was not dictated by some physiological characteristic of the period itself, but rather by marital or magic requirements socially connected with it. These beliefs made adolescence in one tribe serenely religious and beneficent, and in another so dangerously unclean that the child had to cry out in warning that others might avoid her in the woods. The adolescence of girls may equally, as we have seen, be a theme which a culture does not institutionalize. Even where, as in most of Australia, boys' adolescence is given elaborate treatment, it may be that the rites are an induction into the status of manhood and male participation in tribal matters, and female adolescence passes without any kind of formal recognition.

These facts, however, still leave the fundamental question unanswered. Do not all cultures have to cope with the natural turbulence of this period,



even though it may not be given institutional expression? Dr. Mead has studied this question in Samoa. There the girl's life passes through well-marked periods. Her first years out of babyhood are passed in small neighbourhood gangs of age mates from which the little boys are strictly excluded. The corner of the village to which she belongs is all-important, and the little boys are traditional enemies. She has one duty, that of baby-tending, but she takes the baby with her rather than stays home to mind it, and her play is not seriously hampered. A couple of years before puberty, when she grows strong enough to have more difficult tasks required of her and old enough to learn more skilled techniques, the little girls' play group in which she grew up ceases to exist. She assumes woman's dress and must contribute to the work of the household. It is an uninteresting period of life to her and quite without turmoil. Puberty brings no change at all.

A few years after she has come of age, she will begin the pleasant years of casual and irresponsible love affairs that she will prolong as far as possible into the period when marriage is already considered fitting. Puberty itself is marked by no social recognition, no change of attitude or of expectancy. Her pre-adolescent shyness is supposed to remain unchanged for a couple of years. The girl's life in Samoa is blocked out by other considerations than those of physiological sex maturity, and puberty falls in a particularly unstressed and peaceful period during which no adolescent conflicts manifest themselves. Adolescence, therefore, may not only be culturally passed over without ceremonial; it may also be without importance in the emotional life of the child and in the attitude of the village toward her.

Warfare is another social theme that may or may not be used in any culture. Where war is made much of, it may be with contrasting objectives, with contrasting organization in relation to the state, and with contrasting sanctions. War may be, as it was among the Aztecs, a way of getting captives for the religious sacrifices. Since the Spaniards fought to kill, according to Aztec standards they broke the rules of the game. The Aztecs fell back in dismay and Cortez walked as victor into the capital.

There are even quainter notions, from our standpoint, associated with warfare in different parts of the world. For our purposes it is sufficient to notice those regions where organized resort to mutual slaughter never occurs between social groups. Only our familiarity with war makes it intelligible that a state of warfare should alternate with a state of peace in one tribe's dealings with another. The idea is quite common over the world, of course. But on the one hand it is impossible for certain peoples to conceive the possibility of a state of peace, which in their notion would be equivalent to admitting

enemy tribes to the category of human beings, which by definition they are not even though the excluded tribe may be of their own race and culture.

On the other hand, it may be just as impossible for a people to conceive of the possibility of a state of war. Rasmussen tells of the blankness with which the Eskimo met his exposition of our custom. Eskimos very well understand the act of killing a man. If he is in your way, you cast up your estimate of your own strength, and if you are ready to take it upon yourself, you kill him. If you are strong, there is no social retribution. But the idea of an Eskimo village going out against another Eskimo village in battle array or a tribe against tribe, or even of another village being fair game in ambush warfare, is alien to them. All killing comes under one head, and is not separated, as ours is, into categories, the one meritorious, the other a capital offence.

I myself tried to talk of warfare to the Mission Indians of California, but it was impossible. Their misunderstanding of warfare was abysmal. They did not have the basis in their own culture upon which the idea could exist, and their attempts to reason it out reduced the great wars to which we are able to dedicate ourselves with moral fervour to the level of alley brawls. They did not happen to have a cultural pattern that distinguished between them.

War is, we have been forced to admit even in the face of its huge place in our own civilization, an asocial trait. In the chaos following the World War all the wartime arguments that expounded its fostering of courage, of altruism, of spiritual values, gave out a false and offensive ring. War in our own civilization is as good an illustration as one can take of the destructive lengths to which the development of a culturally selected trait may go. If we justify war, it is because all peoples always justify the traits of which they find themselves possessed, not because war will bear an objective examination of its merits.

Warfare is not an isolated case. From every part of the world and from all levels of cultural complexity it is possible to illustrate the overweening and finally often the asocial elaboration of a cultural trait. Those cases are clearest where, as in dietary or mating regulations, for example, traditional usage runs counter to biological drives. Social organization, in anthropology, has a quite specialized meaning owing to the unanimity of all human societies in stressing relationship groups within which marriage is forbidden. No known people regard all women as possible mates. This is not in an effort, as is so often supposed, to prevent inbreeding in our sense, for over great parts of the world it is an own cousin, often the daughter of one's mother's brother, who is the predestined spouse. The relatives to whom the prohibition refers differ utterly among different peoples, but all human societies are alike in

placing a restriction. No human idea has received more constant and complex elaboration in culture than this of incest. The incest groups are often the most important functioning units of the tribe, and the duties of every individual in relation to any other are defined by their relative positions in these groups. These groups function as units in religious ceremonials and in cycles of economic exchange, and it is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the role they have played in social history.

Some areas handle the incest tabu with moderation. In spite of the restrictions there may be a considerable number of women available for a man to marry. In others the group that is tabu has been extended by a social fiction to include vast numbers of individuals who have no traceable ancestors in common, and choice of a mate is in consequence excessively limited. This social fiction receives unequivocal expression in the terms of relationship which are used. Instead of distinguishing lineal from collateral kin as we do in the distinction between father and uncle, brother and cousin, one term means literally "man of my father's group (relationship, locality, etc.) of his generation," not distinguishing between direct and collateral lines, but making other distinctions that are foreign to us. Certain tribes of eastern Australia use an extreme form of this so-called classificatory kinship system. Those whom they call brothers and sisters are all those of their generation with whom they recognize any relationship. There is no cousin category or anything that corresponds to it; all relatives of one's own generation are one's brothers and sisters.

This manner of reckoning relationship is not uncommon in the world, but Australia has in addition an unparalleled horror of sister marriage and an unparalleled development of exogamous restrictions. So the Kurnai, with their extreme classificatory relationship system, feel the Australian horror of sex relationship with all their "sisters," that is, women of their own generation who are in any way related to them. Besides this, the Kurnai have strict locality rules in the choice of a mate. Sometimes two localities, out of the fifteen or sixteen of which the tribe is composed, must exchange women, and can have no mates in any other group. Sometimes there is a group of two or three localities that may exchange with two or three others. Still further, as in all Australia, the old men are a privileged group, and their prerogatives extend to marrying the young and attractive girls. The consequence of these rules is, of course, that in all the local group which must by absolute prescription furnish a young man with his wife, there is no girl who is not touched by one of these tabus. Either she is one of those who through

relationship with his mother is his "sister," or she is already bargained for by an old man, or for some lesser reason she is forbidden to him.

That does not bring the Kurnai to reformulate their exogamous rules. They insist upon them with every show of violence. Therefore, the only way they are usually able to marry is by flying violently in the face of the regulations. They elope. As soon as the village knows that an elopement has occurred, it sets out in pursuit, and if the couple are caught the two are killed. It does not matter that possibly all the pursuers were married by elopement in the same fashion. Moral indignation runs high. There is, however, an island traditionally recognized as a safe haven, and if the couple can reach it and remain away till the birth of a child, they are received again with blows, it is true, but they may defend themselves. After they have run the gauntlet and been given their drubbing, they take up the status of married people in the tribe.

The Kurnai meet their cultural dilemma typically enough. They have extended and complicated a particular aspect of behaviour until it is a social liability. They must either modify it, or get by with a subterfuge. And they use the subterfuge. They avoid extinction, and they maintain their ethics without acknowledged revision. This manner of dealing with the *mores* has lost nothing in the progress of civilization. The older generation of our own civilization similarly maintained monogamy and supported prostitution, and the panegyrics of monogamy were never so fervent as the great days of the red-light districts. Societies have always justified favourite traditional forms. When these traits get out of hand and some form of supplementary behaviour is called in, lip service is given as readily to the traditional form as if the supplementary behaviour did not exist.

Such a bird's-eye survey of human cultural forms makes clear several common misconceptions. In the first place, the institutions that human cultures build up upon the hints presented by the environment or by man's physical necessities do not keep as close to the original impulse as we easily imagine. These hints are, in reality, mere rough sketches, a list of bare facts. They are pin-point potentialities, and the elaboration that takes place around them is dictated by many alien considerations. Warfare is not the expression of the instinct of pugnacity. Man's pugnacity is so small a hint in the human equipment that it may not be given any expression in inter-tribal relations. When it is institutionalized, the form it takes follows other grooves of thought than those implied in the original impulse. Pugnacity is no more than the touch to the ball of custom, a touch also that may be withheld.



Such a view of cultural processes calls for a recasting of many of our current arguments upholding our traditional institutions. These arguments are usually based on the impossibility of man's functioning without these particular traditional forms. Even very special traits come in for this kind of validation, such as the particular form of economic drive that arises under our particular system of property ownership. This is a remarkably special motivation and there are evidences that even in our generation it is being strongly modified. At any rate, we do not have to confuse the issue by discussing it as if it were a matter of biological survival values. Self-support is a motive our civilization has capitalized. If our economic structure changes so that this motive is no longer so potent a drive as it was in the era of the great frontier and expanding industrialism, there are many other motives that would be appropriate to a changed economic organization. Every culture, every era, exploits some few out of a great number of possibilities. Changes may be very disquieting, and involve great losses, but this is due to the difficulty of change itself, not to the fact that our age and country has hit upon the one possible motivation under which human life can be conducted. Change, we must remember, with all its difficulties, is inescapable. Our fears over even very minor shifts in custom are usually quite beside the point. Civilizations might change far more radically than any human authority has ever had the will or the imagination to change them, and still be completely workable. The minor changes that occasion so much denunciation today, such as the increase of divorce, the growing secularization in our cities, the prevalence of the petting party, and many more, could be taken up quite readily into a slightly different pattern of culture. Becoming traditional, they would be given the same richness of content, the same importance and value, that the older patterns had in other generations.

The truth of the matter is rather that the possible human institutions and motives are legion, on every plane of cultural simplicity or complexity, and that wisdom consists in a greatly increased tolerance toward their divergencies. No man can thoroughly participate in any culture unless he has been brought up and has lived according to its forms, but he can grant to other cultures the same significance to their participants which he recognizes in his own.

The diversity of culture results not only from the ease with which societies elaborate or reject possible aspects of existence. It is due even more to a complex interweaving of cultural traits. The final form of any traditional institution, as we have just said, goes far beyond the original human impulse. In

great measure this final form depends upon the way in which the trait has merged with other traits from different fields of experience.

A widespread trait may be saturated with religious beliefs among one people and function as an important aspect of their religion. In another area it may be wholly a matter of economic transfer and be therefore an aspect of their monetary arrangements. The possibilities are endless and the adjustments are often bizarre. The nature of the trait will be quite different in the different areas according to the elements with which it has combined.

It is important to make this process clear to ourselves because otherwise we fall easily into the temptation to generalize into a sociological law the results of a local merging of traits, or we assume their union to be a universal phenomenon. The great period of European plastic art was religiously motivated. Art pictured and made common property the religious scenes and dogmas which were fundamental in the outlook of that period. Modern European aesthetics would have been quite different if mediaeval art had been purely decorative and had not made common cause with religion.

As a matter of history great developments in art have often been remarkably separate from religious motivation and use. Art may be kept definitely apart from religion even where both are highly developed. In the pueblos of the Southwest of the United States, art forms in pottery and textiles command the respect of the artist in any culture, but their sacred bowls carried by the priests or set out on the altars are shoddy and the decorations crude and unstylized. Museums have been known to throw out Southwest religious objects because they were so far below the traditional standard of workmanship. "We have to put a frog there," the Zuñi Indians say, meaning that the religious exigencies eliminate any need of artistry. This separation between art and religion is not a unique trait of the Pueblos. Tribes of South America and of Siberia make the same distinction, though they motivate it in various ways. They do not use their artistic skill in the service of religion. Instead, therefore, of finding the sources of art in a locally important subject matter, religion, as older critics of art have sometimes done, we need rather to explore the extent to which these two can mutually interpenetrate, and the consequences of such merging for both art and religion.

The interpenetration of different fields of experience, and the consequent modification of both of them, can be shown from all phases of existence: economics, sex relations, folklore, material culture, and religion. The process can be illustrated in one of the widespread religious traits of the North American Indians. Up and down the continent, in every culture area except that of the pueblos of the Southwest, supernatural power was obtained in a dream

or vision. Success in life, according to their beliefs, was due to personal contact with the supernatural. Each man's vision gave him power for his lifetime, and in some tribes he was constantly renewing his personal relationship with the spirits by seeking further visions. Whatever he saw, an animal or a star, a plant or a supernatural being, adopted him as a personal protégé, and he could call upon him in need. He had duties to perform for his visionary patron, gifts to give him and obligations of all kinds. In return the spirit gave him the specific powers he promised him in his vision.

In every great region of North America this guardian spirit complex took different form according to the other traits of the culture with which it was most closely associated. In the plateaus of British Columbia it merged with the adolescent ceremonies we have just spoken of. Both boys and girls, among these tribes, went out into the mountains at adolescence for a magic training. Puberty ceremonies have a wide distribution up and down the Pacific Coast, and over most of this region they are quite distinct from the guardian spirit practices. But in British Columbia they are merged. The climax of the magic adolescent training for boys was the acquisition of a guardian spirit who by its gifts dictated the lifetime profession of the young man. He became a warrior, a shaman, a hunter, or a gambler according to the supernatural visitant. Girls also received guardian spirits representing their domestic duties. So strongly is the guardian spirit experience among these peoples moulded by its association with the ceremonial of adolescence that anthropologists who know this region have argued that the entire vision complex of the American Indians had its origin in puberty rites. But the two are not genetically connected. They are locally merged, and in the merging both traits have taken special and characteristic forms.

In other parts of the continent, the guardian spirit is not sought at puberty, nor by all the youths of the tribe. Consequently the complex has in these cultures no kind of relationship with puberty rites even when any such exist. On the southern plains it is adult men who must acquire mystic sanctions. The vision complex merged with a trait very different from puberty rites. The Osage are organized in kinship groups in which descent is traced through the father and disregards the mother's line. These clan groups have a common inheritance of supernatural blessing. The legend of each clan tells how its ancestor sought a vision, and was blessed by the animal whose name the clan has inherited. The ancestor of the mussel clan sought seven times, with the tears running down his face, a supernatural blessing. At last he met the mussel and spoke to it saying:

O grandfather,

The little ones have nothing of which to make their bodies.

Thereupon the mussel answered him:

You say the little ones have nothing of which to make their bodies.

Let the little ones make of me their bodies.

When the little ones make of me their bodies,

They shall always live to see old age.

Behold the wrinkles upon my skin [shell]

Which I have made to be the means of reaching old age.

When the little ones make of me their bodies

They shall always live to see the signs of old age upon their skins

The seven bends of the river [of life]

I pass successfully.

And in my travels the gods themselves have not the power to see the trail  
that I make.

When the little ones make of me their bodies

No one, not even the gods, shall be able to see the trail they make

Among these people all the familiar elements of the vision quest are present, but it was attained by a first ancestor of the clan, and its blessings are inherited by a blood-relationship group.

This situation among the Osage presents one of the fullest pictures in the world of totemism, that close mingling of social organization and of religious veneration for the ancestor. Totemism is described from all parts of the world, and anthropologists have argued that the clan totem originated in the "personal totem," or guardian spirit. But the situation is exactly analogous to that of the plateaus of British Columbia where the vision quest merged with the adolescent rites, only that here it has merged with hereditary privileges of the clan. So strong has this new association become that a vision is no longer thought to give man power automatically. The blessings of the vision are attained only by inheritance, and among the Osage long chants have grown up describing the ancestor's encounters, and detailing the blessings which his descendants may claim in consequence.

In both these cases it is not only the vision complex which receives a different character in different regions as it merges with puberty rites or clan organization. The adolescence ceremonies and the social organization are equally coloured by the interweaving of the vision quest. The interaction is



mutual. The vision complex, the puberty rites, the clan organization, and many other traits that enter also into close relationship with the vision, are strands which are braided in many combinations. The consequences of the different combinations that result from this intermingling of traits cannot be exaggerated. In both the regions of which we have just spoken, both where the religious experience was merged with puberty rites and where it was merged with clan organization, as a natural corollary of the associated practices all individuals of the tribe could receive power from the vision for success in any undertaking. Achievement in any occupation was credited to the individual's claim upon a vision experience. A successful gambler or a successful hunter drew his power from it just as a successful shaman did. According to their dogma all avenues of advancement were closed to those who had failed to obtain a supernatural patron.

In California, however, the vision was the professional warrant of the shaman. It marked him as a person apart. It was just in this region, therefore, that the most aberrant aspects of this experience were developed. The vision was no longer a slight hallucination for which the stage could be set by fasting and torture and isolation. It was a trance experience which overtook the exceptionally unstable members of the community and especially the women. Among the Shasta it was the convention that only women were so blessed. The required experience was definitely cataleptic and came upon the novice after a preliminary dreaming had prepared the way. She fell senseless and rigid to the ground. When she came to herself blood oozed from her mouth. All the ceremonies by which for years after she validated her call to be a shaman were further demonstrations of her liability to cataleptic seizures and were regarded as the cure by which her life was saved. In tribes like the Shasta not only the vision experience had changed its character to a violent seizure which differentiated religious practitioners from all others, but the character of the shamans was equally modified by the nature of the trance experience. They were definitely the unstable members of the community. In this region contests between shamans took the form of dancing each other down, that is, of seeing which one could withstand longest in a dance the cataleptic seizure which would inevitably overtake them. Both the vision experience and shamanism had been profoundly affected by the close relationship into which they had entered. The merging of the two traits, no less than the merging of the vision experience and puberty rites or clan organization, had drastically modified both fields of behaviour.

In the same way in our own civilization the separateness of the church and of the marriage sanction is historically clear, yet the religious sacrament of

wedlock for centuries dictated development both in sex behaviour and in the church. The peculiar character of marriage during those centuries was due to the merging of two essentially unrelated cultural traits. On the other hand, marriage has often been the means by which wealth was traditionally transferred. In cultures where this is true, the close association of marriage with economic transfer may quite obliterate the fact that marriage is fundamentally a matter of sexual and child-rearing adjustments. Marriage in each case must be understood in relation to other traits to which it has become assimilated, and we should not run into the mistake of thinking that "marriage" can be understood in the two cases by the same set of ideas. We must allow for the different components which have been built up into the resulting trait.

We greatly need the ability to analyze traits of our own cultural heritage into their several parts. Our discussions of the social order would gain in clarity if we learned to understand in this way the complexity of even our simplest behaviour. Racial differences and prestige prerogatives have so merged among Anglo-Saxon peoples that we fail to separate biological racial matters from our most socially conditioned prejudices. Even among nations as nearly related to the Anglo-Saxons as the Latin peoples, such prejudices take different forms, so that, in Spanish-colonized countries and in British colonies racial differences have not the same social significance. Christianity and the position of women, similarly, are historically interrelated traits, and they have at different times interacted very differently. The present high position of women in Christian countries is no more a "result" of Christianity than was Origen's coupling of woman with the deadly temptations. These interpenetrations of traits occur and disappear, and the history of culture is in considerable degree a history of their nature and fates and associations. But the genetic connection we so easily see in a complex trait and our horror at any disturbance of its interrelationships is largely illusory. The diversity of the possible combinations is endless, and adequate social orders can be built indiscriminately upon a great variety of these foundations.

### CHAPTER III: THE INTEGRATION OF CULTURE

The diversity of cultures can be endlessly documented. A field of human behaviour may be ignored in some societies until it barely exists; it may even be in some cases unimagined. Or it may almost monopolize the whole organized behaviour of the society, and the most alien situations be manipulated only in its terms. Traits having no intrinsic relation one with the other, and historically independent, merge and become inextricable, providing the oc-

casation for behaviour that has no counterpart in regions that do not make these identifications. It is a corollary of this that standards, no matter in what aspect of behaviour, range in different cultures from the positive to the negative pole. We might suppose that in the matter of taking life all peoples would agree in condemnation. On the contrary, in a matter of homicide, it may be held that one is blameless if diplomatic relations have been severed between neighbouring countries, or that one kills by custom his first two children, or that a husband has right of life and death over his wife, or that it is the duty of the child to kill his parents before they are old. It may be that those are killed who steal a fowl, or who cut their upper teeth first, or who are born on a Wednesday. Among some peoples a person suffers torments at having caused an accidental death; among others it is a matter of no consequence. Suicide also may be a light matter, the recourse of anyone who has suffered some slight rebuff, an act that occurs constantly in a tribe. It may be the highest and noblest act a wise man can perform. The very tale of it, on the other hand, may be a matter for incredulous mirth, and the act itself impossible to conceive as a human possibility. Or it may be a crime punishable by law, or regarded as a sin against the gods.

The diversity of custom in the world is not, however, a matter which we can only helplessly chronicle. Self-torture here, head-hunting there, pre-nuptial chastity in one tribe and adolescent license in another, are not a list of unrelated facts, each of them to be greeted with surprise wherever it is found or wherever it is absent. The tabus on killing oneself or another, similarly, though they relate to no absolute standard, are not therefore fortuitous. The significance of cultural behaviour is not exhausted when we have clearly understood that it is local and man-made and hugely variable. It tends also to be integrated. A culture, like an individual, is a more or less consistent pattern of thought and action. Within each culture there come into being characteristic purposes not necessarily shared by other types of society. In obedience to these purposes, each people further and further consolidates its experience, and in proportion to the urgency of these drives the heterogeneous items of behaviour take more and more congruous shape. Taken up by a well-integrated culture, the most ill-assorted acts become characteristic of its peculiar goals, often by the most unlikely metamorphoses. The form that these acts take we can understand only by understanding first the emotional and intellectual mainsprings of that society.

Such patterning of culture cannot be ignored as if it were an unimportant detail. The whole, as modern science is insisting in many fields, is not merely the sum of all its parts, but the result of a unique arrangement and interrela-

tion of the parts that has brought about a new entity. Gunpowder is not merely the sum of sulphur and charcoal and saltpeter, and no amount of knowledge even of all three of its elements in all the forms they take in the natural world will demonstrate the nature of gunpowder. New potentialities have come into being in the resulting compound that were not present in its elements, and its mode of behaviour is indefinitely changed from that of any of its elements in other combinations.

Cultures, likewise, are more than the sum of their traits. We may know all about the distribution of a tribe's form of marriage, ritual dances, and puberty initiations, and yet understand nothing of the culture as a whole which has used these elements to its own purpose. This purpose selects from among the possible traits in the surrounding regions those which it can use, and discards those which it cannot. Other traits it recasts into conformity with its demands. The process of course need never be conscious during its whole course, but to overlook it in the study of the patternings of human behaviour is to renounce the possibility of intelligent interpretation.

This integration of cultures is not in the least mystical. It is the same process by which a style in art comes into being and persists. Gothic architecture, beginning in what was hardly more than a preference for altitude and light, became, by the operation of some canon of taste that developed within its technique, the unique and homogeneous art of the thirteenth century. It discarded elements that were incongruous, modified others to its purposes, and invented others that accorded with its taste. When we describe the process historically, we inevitably use animistic forms of expression as if there were choice and purpose in the growth of this great art form. But this is due to the difficulty in our language forms. There was no conscious choice, and no purpose. What was at first no more than a slight bias in local forms and techniques expressed itself more and more forcibly, integrated itself in more and more definite standards, and eventuated in Gothic art.

What has happened in the great art styles happens also in cultures as a whole. All the miscellaneous behaviour directed toward getting a living, mating, warring, and worshipping the gods, is made over into consistent patterns in accordance with unconscious canons of choice that develop within the culture. Some cultures, like some periods of art, fail of such integration, and about many others we know too little to understand the motives that actuate them. But cultures at every level of complexity, even the simplest, have achieved it. Such cultures are more or less successful attainments of integrated behaviour, and the marvel is that there can be so many of these possible configurations. . . .



The study of cultural behaviour . . . can no longer be handled by equating particular local arrangements with the generic primitive. Anthropologists are turning from the study of primitive culture to that of primitive cultures, and the implications of this change from the singular to the plural are only just beginning to be evident.

The importance of the study of the whole configuration as over against the continued analysis of its parts is stressed in field after field of modern science. Wilhelm Stern has made it basic in his work in philosophy and psychology. He insists that the undivided totality of the person must be the point of departure. He criticizes the atomistic studies that have been almost universal both in introspective and experimental psychology, and he substitutes investigation into the configuration of personality. The whole *Struktur* school has devoted itself to work of this kind in various fields. Worringer has shown how fundamental a difference this approach makes in the field of aesthetics. He contrasts the highly developed art of two periods, the Greek and the Byzantine. The older criticism, he insists, which defined art in absolute terms and identified it with the classical standards, could not possibly understand the processes of art as they are represented in Byzantine painting or mosaic. Achievement in one cannot be judged in terms of the other, because each was attempting to achieve quite different ends. The Greeks in their art attempted to give expression to their own pleasure in activity; they sought to embody their identification of their vitality with the objective world. Byzantine art, on the other hand, objectified abstraction, a profound feeling of separation in the face of outside nature. Any understanding of the two must take account, not only of comparisons of artistic ability, but far more of differences of artistic intention. The two forms were contrasting, integrated configurations, each of which could make use of forms and standards that were incredible in the other.

The *Gestalt* (configuration) psychology has done some of the most striking work in justifying the importance of this point of departure from the whole rather than from its parts. *Gestalt* psychologists have shown that in the simplest sense-perception no analysis of the separate percepts can account for the total experience. It is not enough to divide perceptions up into objective fragments. The subjective framework, the forms provided by past experience, are crucial and cannot be omitted. The "wholeness-properties" and the "wholeness-tendencies" must be studied in addition to the simple association mechanisms with which psychology has been satisfied since the time of Locke. The whole determines its parts, not only their relation but their very nature. Between two wholes there is a discontinuity in kind, and any understanding

must take account of their different natures, over and above a recognition of the similar elements that have entered into the two. The work in *Gestalt* psychology has been chiefly in those fields where evidence can be experimentally arrived at in the laboratory, but its implications reach far beyond the simple demonstrations which are associated with its work.

In the social sciences the importance of integration and configuration was stressed in the last generation by Wilhelm Dilthey. His primary interest was in the great philosophies and interpretations of life. Especially in *Die Typen der Weltanschauung*<sup>2</sup> he analyzes part of the history of thought to show the relativity of philosophical systems. He sees them as great expressions of the variety of life, moods, *Lebensstimmungen*, integrated attitudes the fundamental categories of which cannot be resolved one into another. He argues vigorously against the assumption that any one of them can be final. He does not formulate as cultural the different attitudes he discusses, but because he takes for discussion great philosophical configurations, and historical periods like that of Frederick the Great, his work has led naturally to more conscious recognition of the role of culture.

This recognition has been given its most elaborate expression by Oswald Spengler. His *Decline of the West* takes its title not from its theme of destiny ideas, as he calls the dominant patterning of a civilization, but from a thesis which has no bearing upon our present discussion, namely, that these cultural configurations have, like any organism, a span of life they cannot overpass. . . . [But] Spengler's far more valuable and original analysis is that of contrasting configurations in Western civilization. . . . Anthropologically speaking, Spengler's picture of world civilizations suffers from the necessity under which he labours of treating modern stratified society as if it had the essential homogeneity of a folk culture. In our present state of knowledge, the historical data of western European culture are too complex and the social differentiation too thorough-going to yield to the necessary analysis. . . .

It is one of the philosophical justifications for the study of primitive peoples that the facts of simpler cultures may make clear social facts that are otherwise baffling and not open to demonstration. This is nowhere more true than in the matter of the fundamental and distinctive cultural configurations that pattern existence and condition the thoughts and emotions of the individuals who participate in those cultures. The whole problem of the formation of the individual's habit-patterns under the influence of traditional custom can best be understood at the present time through the study of simpler peoples. This does not mean that the facts and processes we can discover in

<sup>2</sup> [*The Types of World-Views.*]

this way are limited in their application to primitive civilizations. Cultural configurations are as compelling and as significant in the highest and most complex societies of which we have knowledge. But the material is too intricate and too close to our eyes for us to cope with it successfully.

The understanding we need of our own cultural processes can most economically be arrived at by a detour. When the historical relations of human beings and their immediate forbears in the animal kingdom were too involved to use in establishing the fact of biological evolution, Darwin made use instead of the structure of beetles, and the process, which in the complex physical organization of the human is confused, in the simpler material was transparent in its cogency. It is the same in the study of cultural mechanisms. We need all the enlightenment we can obtain from the study of thought and behaviour as it is organized in the less complicated groups. . . .

## OSWALD SPENGLER

SOCIOLOGISTS and psychologists have sometimes argued that the “inner” mental states of human actors—motives, intentions, and values—must be taken into consideration if a satisfactory explanation is to be given of human behavior. Accordingly, they have urged, the analytical methods which have proved successful in the physical sciences are either inappropriate to the study of human phenomena, or else inadequate, so that some other method must be developed by means of which the human spirit, in its most characteristic aspects, can be apprehended and understood. Occasionally, the same position has been taken with respect to the study of cultures, for cultures too, some thinkers have insisted, have a certain “inner” cast and pattern, which is responsible for the unique quality which each culture displays, as well as the wide variations from culture to culture. Oswald Spengler (1880–1936), German philosopher of history, whose name is popularly associated with a pessimistic view of human destiny and a cynical view of human history, was one of the most uncompromising exponents of the theory that cultures are unique entities, autonomous and inaccessible to “scientific method.” Spengler recognized eight different cultures, which he interpreted as “super-organisms”; and though each of these cultures must run through a definite sequence of proto-biological phases, each culture is nonetheless pervaded and defined by an unduplicated set of attitudes which, taken together, constitute that culture’s “master-pattern” and provide a key to the understanding of its inherent destiny. Each element of the pattern—art, music, architecture, philosophy, religion, economics, politics, and even mathematics—characteristically reflects the special quality and dominant stress of the culture’s spirit; and the whole pattern can be discerned, in highly condensed form, in some “prime symbol.” Spengler’s method was “universal symbolism.” A cultural pattern can be grasped only when the full implications of the prime symbol have been unraveled; but these implications can only be “intuited” or “felt,” and Spengler has only contempt for rational method and causal analysis. In his major work, *The Decline of the West*, Spengler sought to elaborate this method and to apply it by juxtaposing and comparing his eight cultures, bringing out their common morphology as well the peculiar deployment of spirit in each of them. Though many have debated the validity of the method, substance, and conclusions of Spengler’s argument, there is no denying his brilliant insight and powerful expression; and his remains an outstanding and dramatic statement of one approach to the study of man.

*The Decline of the West* was first published in German in 1918. It was translated into English by Charles Francis Atkinson and published in America between 1926 and 1928. It is from this translation that the following selection has been taken.





## THE DECLINE OF THE WEST

[*The Prime Symbol*]

Each of the great Cultures . . . has arrived at a secret language of world-feeling that is only fully comprehensible by him whose soul belongs to that Culture. We must not deceive ourselves. Perhaps we can read a little way into the Classical soul, because its form-language is almost the exact inversion of the Western; how far we have succeeded or can ever succeed is a question which necessarily forms the starting-point of all criticism of the Renaissance, and it is a very difficult one. But when we are told that probably (it is at best a doubtful venture to meditate upon so alien an expression of Being) the Indians conceived numbers which according to our ideas possessed neither value nor magnitude nor relativity, and which only became positive and negative, great or small units in virtue of position, we have to admit that it is impossible for us exactly to re-experience what spiritually underlies this kind of number. For us, 3 is always *something*, be it positive or negative; for the Greeks it was unconditionally a positive magnitude, +3; but for the Indian it indicates a possibility without existence, to which the word "something" is *not yet* applicable, outside both existence and non-existence which are *properties* to be introduced into it. +3, -3, <sup>1</sup>3, are thus emanating actualities of subordinate rank which reside in the mysterious substance (3) in some way that is entirely hidden from us. It takes a Brahmanic soul to perceive these numbers as self-evident, as ideal emblems of a self-complete world-form; to us they are as unintelligible as is the Brahman Nirvana, for which, as lying beyond life *and* death, sleep *and* waking, passion, compassion *and* dispassion and yet somehow actual, words entirely fail us. . . .

. . . There is a plurality of prime symbols. It is the depth-experience through which the world becomes, through which perception *extends itself* to world. Its signification is for the soul to which it belongs and only for that soul. . . . It actualizes for every high Culture the possibility of form upon which that Culture's existence rests and it does so of deep necessity. All fundamental words like our mass, substance, material, thing, body, extension (and multitudes of words of the like order in other culture-tongues) are emblems, obligatory and determined by destiny, that out of the infinite abundance of world-possibilities evoke in the name of the individual Culture

---

This selection has been reprinted from *The Decline of the West* by Oswald Spengler, by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Copyright (Vol. I) 1926 by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., pp. 178-180, 183-191.

those possibilities that alone are significant and therefore necessary for it. None of them is exactly transferable just as it is into the experiential living and knowing of another Culture. And none of these prime words ever recurs. . . . One soul listens to the world-experience in A flat major, another in F minor; one apprehends it in the Euclidean spirit, another in the contrapuntal, a third in the Magian spirit. From the purest analytical Space and from Nirvana to the most somatic reality of Athens, there is a series of prime symbols each of which is capable of forming a complete world out of itself. And, as the idea of the Babylonian or that of the Indian world was remote, strange and elusive for the men of the five or six Cultures that followed, so also the Western world will be incomprehensible to the men of Cultures yet unborn.

### *Apollinian, Faustian and Magian Soul*

Henceforth, we shall designate the soul of the Classical Culture . . . by the name (familiarized by Nietzsche) of the *Apollinian*. In opposition to it we have the *Faustian* soul, whose prime-symbol is pure and limitless space, and whose "body" is the Western Culture that blossomed forth with the birth of the Romanesque style in the 10th century in the Northern plain between the Elbe and the Tagus. The nude statue is Apollinian, the art of the fugue Faustian. Apollinian are: mechanical statics, the sensuous cult of the Olympian gods, the politically individual city-states of Greece, the doom of Œdipus and the phallus-symbol. Faustian are: Galileian dynamics, Catholic and Protestant dogmatics, the great dynasties of the Baroque with their cabinet diplomacy, the destiny of Lear and the Madonna-ideal from Dante's Beatrice to the last line of *Faust II*. The painting that defines the individual body by contours is Apollinian, that which forms space by means of light and shade is Faustian—this is the difference between the fresco of Polygnotus and the oil painting of Rembrandt. The Apollinian existence is that of the Greek who describes his ego as *soma* and who lacks all idea of an inner development and therefore all real history, inward and outward; the Faustian is an existence which *is led* with a deep consciousness and introspection of the ego, and a resolutely personal culture evidenced in memoirs, reflections, retrospects and prospects and conscience. And in the time of Augustus, in the countries between Nile and Tigris, Black Sea and South Arabia, there appears—aloof but able to speak to us through forms borrowed, adopted and inherited—the Magian soul of the Arabian Culture with its algebra, astrology and alchemy, its mosaics and arabesques, its caliphates and mosques, and the

sacraments and scriptures of the Persian, Jewish, Christian, "post-Classical" and Manichaean religions.

"Space"—speaking now in the Faustian idiom—is a spiritual something, rigidly distinct from the momentary sense-present, which *could* not be represented in an Apollinian language, whether Greek or Latin. But the created *expression-space* of the Apollinian arts is equally alien to ours. The tiny cella of the early-Classical temple was a dumb dark nothingness, a structure (originally) of perishable material, an envelope of the moment in contrast to the eternal vaults of Magian cupolas and Gothic naves, and the closed ranks of columns were expressly meant to convey that for the eye at any rate this body possessed no *Inward*. In no other Culture is the firm footing, the socket, so emphasized. The Doric column bores into the ground, the vessels are always thought of from below upward (whereas those of the Renaissance float above their footing), and the sculpture-schools feel the stabilizing of their figures as their main problem. Hence in archaic works the legs are disproportionately emphasized, the foot is planted on the full sole, and if the drapery falls straight down, a part of the hem is removed to show that the foot is standing. The Classical relief is strictly stereometrically set on a plane, and there is an interspace between the figures but no depth. A landscape of Claude Lorrain, on the contrary, is *nothing but* space, every detail being made to subserve its illustration. All bodies in it possess an atmospheric and perspective meaning purely as carriers of light and shade. The extreme of this disembodiment of the world in the service of space is Impressionism. Given this world-feeling, the Faustian soul in the springtime necessarily arrived at an architectural problem which had its centre of gravity in the spatial vaulting-over of vast, and from porch to choir dynamically deep, cathedrals. This last expressed *its* depth-experience. But with it was associated, in opposition to the cavernous Magian expression-space, the element of a soaring into the broad universe. Magian roofing, whether it be cupola or barrel-vault or even the horizontal baulk of a basilica, *covers in*. . . . On the other hand, in the cathedral of Florence the cupola *crowns* the long Gothic body of 1367, and the same tendency rose in Bramante's scheme for St. Peter's to a veritable towering-up, a magnificent "Excelsior," that Michelangelo carried to completion with the dome that floats high and bright over the vast vaulting. To this sense of space the Classical opposes the symbol of the Doric peripteros, wholly corporeal and comprehensible in one glance. . . .

. . . A "templum" was created where a rite was to be performed or where the representative of the state authority, senate or army, happened to be. It existed only for the duration of its use, and the spell was then removed. It

was probably only about 700 B.C. that the Classical soul so far mastered itself as to represent this architectural Nothing in the sensible form of a built body. In the long run the Euclidean feeling proved stronger than the mere antipathy to duration.

Faustian architecture, on the contrary, begins on the grand scale simultaneously with the first stirrings of a new piety (the Cluniac reform, c. 1000) and a new thought (the Eucharistic controversy between Berengar of Tours and Lanfranc 1050), and proceeds at once to plans of gigantic intention; often enough, as in the case of Speyer, the whole community did not suffice to fill the cathedral, and often again it proved impossible to complete the projected scheme. The passionate language of this architecture is that of the poems too. Far apart as may seem the Christian hymnology of the south and the Eddas of the still heathen north, they are alike in the implicit space-endlessness of prosody, rhythmic syntax and imagery. . . .

The accents of the Homeric hexameter are the soft rustle of a leaf in the midday sun, the rhythm of *matter*; but the "Strabreim," like "potential energy" in the world-pictures of modern physics, creates a tense restraint in the void without limits, distant night-storms above the highest peaks. In its swaying indefiniteness all words and things dissolve themselves—it is the dynamics, not the statics, of language. . . . Here is heralded the colour of Rembrandt and the instrumentation of Beethoven—*here infinite solitude is felt as the home of the Faustian soul*. What is Valhalla? . . . Valhalla is something beyond all sensible actualities floating in remote, dim, Faustian regions. Olympus rests on the homely Greek soil, the Paradise of the Fathers is a magic garden somewhere in the Universe, but Valhalla is nowhere. Lost in the limitless, it appears with its inharmonious gods and heroes the supreme symbol of solitude. Siegfried, Parzeval, Tristan, Hamlet, Faust are the loneliest heroes in all the Cultures. Read the wondrous awakening of the inner life in Wolfram's Parzeval. The longing for the woods, the mysterious compassion, the ineffable sense of forsakenness—it is all Faustian and only Faustian. Every one of us knows it. The motive returns with all its profundity in the Easter scene of Faust I.

A longing pure and not to be described  
drove me to wander over woods and fields,  
and in a mist of hot abundant tears  
I felt a world arise and live for me.

Of this world-experience neither Apollinian nor Magian man, neither Homer nor the Gospels, knows anything whatever. The climax of the poem of Wolfram, that wondrous Good Friday morning scene when the hero, at



odds with God and with himself, meets the noble Gawan and resolves to go on pilgrimage to Tevrezent, takes us to the heart of the *Faustian* religion. Here one can feel the mystery of the Eucharist which binds the communicant to a mystic company, to a Church that alone can give bliss. In the myth of the Holy Grail and its Knights one can feel the inward necessity of the German-Northern Catholicism. In opposition to the Classical sacrifices offered to individual gods in separate temples, there is here the *one never-ending* sacrifice repeated everywhere and every day. This is the Faustian idea of the 9th-11th Centuries, the Edda time, foreshadowed by Anglo-Saxon missionaries like Winfried but only then ripened. The Cathedral, with its High Altar enclosing the accomplished miracle, is its expression in stone.

The plurality of separate bodies which represents Cosmos for the Classical soul, requires a similar pantheon—hence the antique polytheism. The *single* world-volume, be it conceived as cavern or as space, demands the *single* god of Magian or Western Christianity. Athene or Apollo might be represented by a statue, but it is and has long been evident to our feeling that the Deity of the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation can only be “manifested” in the storm of an organ fugue or the solemn progress of cantata and mass. From the rich manifold of figures in the Edda and contemporary legends of saints to Goethe our myth develops itself in steady opposition to the Classical—in the one case a continuous disintegration of the divine that culminated in the early Empire in an impossible multitude of deities, in the other a process of simplification that led to the Deism of the 18th Century.

. . . About the end of the 18th Century this religiousness could no longer be limited to pictorial expression, and instrumental music came as its last and only form-language: we may say that the Catholic faith is to the Protestant as an altar-piece is to an oratorio. But even the Germanic gods and heroes are surrounded by this rebuffing immensity and enigmatic gloom. They are steeped in music and in night, for daylight gives visual bounds and therefore shapes bodily things. Night eliminates body, day soul. Apollo and Athene have no souls. On Olympus rests the eternal light of the transparent southern day, and Apollo's hour is high noon, when great Pan sleeps. But Valhalla is light-less, and even in the Eddas we can trace that deep midnight of Faust's study-broodings, the midnight that is caught by Rembrandt's etchings and absorbs Beethoven's tone colours. No Wotan or Baldur or Freya has “Euclidean” form. . . .

That which is expressed by the soul of the West in its extraordinary wealth of media—words, tones, colours, pictorial perspectives, philosophical systems,

legends, the spaciousness of Gothic cathedrals and the formulae of functions—namely its world-feeling, is expressed by the soul of Old Egypt (which was remote from all ambitions towards theory and literariness) almost exclusively by the immediate language of *Stone*. Instead of spinning word-subtleties around its form of extension, its “space” and its “time,” instead of forming hypotheses and number-systems and dogmas, it set up its huge symbols in the landscape of the Nile in all silence. Stone is the great emblem of the Timeless-Become; space and death seem bound up in it. “Men have built for the dead,” says Bachofen in his autobiography, “before they have built for the living, and even as a perishable wooden structure suffices for the span of time that is given to the living, so the housing of the dead for ever demands the solid stone of the earth. The oldest cult is associated with the stone that marks the place of burial, the oldest temple-building with the tomb-structure, the origins of art and decoration with the grave-ornament. Symbol has created itself in the graves. That which is thought and felt and silently prayed at the grave-side can be expressed by no word, but only hinted by the boding symbol that stands in unchanging grave repose.” The dead strive no more. They are no more Time, but only Space—something that stays (if indeed it stays at all) but does *not* ripen towards a Future; and hence it is stone, the abiding stone, that expresses how the dead is mirrored in the waking consciousness of the living. The Faustian soul looks for an immortality to follow the bodily end, a sort of marriage with endless space, and it disembodies the stone in its Gothic thrust-system (contemporary, we may note, with the “consecutives” in Church music) till at last nothing remained visible but the indwelling depth- and height-energy of this self-extension. The Apollinian soul would have its dead burned, would see them annihilated, and so it remained averse from stone building throughout the early period of its Culture. The Egyptian soul saw itself as moving down a narrow and inexorably-prescribed life-path to come at the end before the judges of the dead (“Book of the Dead,” cap. 125). That was its *Destiny-idea*. The Egyptian’s existence is that of the traveller who follows one unchanging direction, and the whole form-language of his Culture is a translation into the sensible of this one theme. And as we have taken *endless space* as the prime symbol of the North and *body* as that of the Classical, so we may take the word *way* as most intelligibly expressing that of the Egyptians. Strangely, and for Western thought almost incomprehensibly, the one element in extension that they emphasize is that of direction in depth. The tomb-temples of the Old Kingdom and especially the mighty pyramid-temples of the Fourth Dynasty represent, not a purposed organization of space such as we

find in the mosque and the cathedral, but a rhythmically ordered *sequence* of spaces. The sacred way leads from the gate-building on the Nile through passages, halls, arcaded courts and pillared rooms that grow ever narrower and narrower, to the chamber of the dead, and similarly the Sun-temples of the Fifth Dynasty are not "buildings" but a path enclosed by mighty masonry. The reliefs and the paintings appear always as rows which with an impressive compulsion lead the beholder in a definite direction. The ram and sphinx avenues of the New Empire have the same object. For the Egyptian, the depth-experience which governed his world-form was so emphatically directional that he comprehended space more or less as a continuous process of actualization. There is nothing rigid about distance as expressed here. The man must move, and so become himself a symbol of life, in order to enter into relation with the stone part of the symbolism. "Way" signifies both Destiny and third dimension. The grand wall-surfaces, reliefs, colonnades past which he moves are "length and breadth"; that is, mere perceptions of the senses, and it is the forward-driving life that *extends* them into "world." Thus the Egyptian experienced space, we may say, in and by the processional march along its distinct elements, whereas the Greek who sacrificed *outside* the temple did not feel it and the man of our Gothic centuries praying in the cathedral let himself be immersed in the quiet infinity of it. And consequently the art of these Egyptians must aim at *plane* effects and nothing else, even when it is making use of solid means. For the Egyptian, the pyramid over the king's tomb is a *triangle*, a huge, powerfully expressive *plane* that, whatever be the direction from which one approaches, closes off the "way" and commands the landscape. For him, the columns of the inner passages and courts, with their dark backgrounds, their dense array and their profusion of adornments, appear entirely as vertical strips which rhythmically accompany the march of the priests. . . .

There is, however, another Culture that, different as it most fundamentally is from the Egyptian, yet found a closely-related prime symbol. This is the Chinese, with its intensely directional principle of the Tao. But whereas the Egyptian treads to the end a way that is prescribed for him with an inexorable necessity, the Chinaman *wanders* through his world; consequently, he is conducted to his god or his ancestral tomb not by ravines of stone, between faultless smooth walls, but by friendly Nature herself. Nowhere else has the *landscape* become so genuinely the material of the architecture. "Here, on religious foundations, there has been developed a grand lawfulness and unity common to all building, which, combined with the strict maintenance of a north-south general axis, always holds together gate-buildings, side-buildings,

courts and halls in the same homogeneous plan, and has led finally to so grandiose a planning and such a command over ground and space that one is quite justified in saying that the artist builds and reckons with the landscape itself." The temple is not a self-contained building but a lay-out, in which hills, water, trees, flowers, and stones in definite forms and dispositions are just as important as gates, walls, bridges and houses. This Culture is the only one in which the art of gardening is a grand religious art. There are gardens that are reflections of particular Buddhist sects. It is the architecture of the landscape, and only that, which explains the architecture of the buildings, with their flat extension and the emphasis laid on the roof as the really expressive element. And just as the devious ways through doors, over bridges, round hills and walls lead at last to the end, so the paintings take the beholder from detail to detail whereas Egyptian relief masterfully points him in the one set direction. "The whole picture is *not* to be taken at once. Sequence in time presupposes a sequence of space-elements through which the eye is to wander from one to the next." Whereas the Egyptian architecture dominates the landscape, the Chinese espouses it. But in both cases it is direction in depth that maintains the *becoming* of space as a continuously-present experience.



## MORRIS E. OPLER

IN some measure reacting to Benedict's theory of cultural patterns, Morris Opler, a student of Franz Boas (1858-1942) and of Benedict herself, describes less massive segments of cultural integration. He concerns himself with a whole culture but does not search for any single unifying spirit or principle within it. Instead, he factors out a number of "themes" which are actually clusters of values that motivate individual conduct under given circumstances. Fourteen of the twenty themes which Opler distinguishes in the culture of the Lipan Apache Indians of southwestern United States are given in the selection which follows. Though more wary in his approach, Opler, like Benedict, is attempting to pinpoint a culture configuration—even though a multiple one—and his success might partly be tested by the extent to which his Lipan themes, taken compositely, are inapplicable to any other culture of the student's acquaintance.

Morris Edward Opler was born in Buffalo, New York, in 1907, received his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 1933, and is at present professor of anthropology at Cornell University. He specializes in the culture history and folklore of the Indians of the Southwest, but has also studied the societies of Japan and India, and has written on general problems of psychology, race, and culture. Although his method has been widely discussed, there are few anthropologists who have followed Opler's lead and subjected cultures known to them to a similar thematic analysis.



### THEMES AS DYNAMIC FORCES IN CULTURE

A study of any society, nonliterate or "modern," ordinarily divides into familiar categories, such as political organization, economy, social life, religion, art, etc. Yet, in spite of the universality of human needs which this suggests and the historical connections between peoples of which we are aware, each culture, in specific respects and in its totality, is different from every other, both in content and in organization.

We have, of course, ways of referring to the uniqueness of the individual

---

The first of these selections has been reprinted from M. E. Opler, "Themes as Dynamic Forces in Culture," *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. LI (July 1945-May 1946), p. 198 by permission of the publisher; the second is from M. E. Opler, "An Application of the Theory of Themes in Culture," *Journal of the Washington Academy of Sciences*, Vol. XXXVI (1946), pp. 137-161 by permission of the publisher.

culture. We speak of the "flavor," the "feel," the "spirit," or the "genius" of a particular way of life. We may ascribe its peculiar characteristics to the "pattern" into which its elements have fallen or to a "configuration" into which the behavior and thinking of its carriers fit. But this expressive vocabulary, though it has been useful and even at times illuminating, implies more than it actually reveals. To borrow terms and concepts from art, psychology, and philosophy may add flexibility and sparkle to the social scientist's descriptive offerings, but it has its limitations for serious analytical work. . . .

It is the thesis of this paper that a limited number of dynamic affirmations, which I shall call *themes*, can be identified in every culture and that the key to the character, structure, and direction of the specific culture is to be sought in the nature, expression, and interrelationship of these themes. . . . The term "theme" is used here in a technical sense to denote a postulate or position, declared or implied, and usually controlling behavior or stimulating activity, which is tacitly approved or openly promoted in a society. . . .

### *AN APPLICATION OF THE THEORY OF THEMES IN CULTURE*

Before introducing the themes of Lipan culture and the supporting evidence that seems to me to validate them, it may be helpful to explain how they were determined. After the information had been obtained in the field, the notebooks were read and headings were supplied to guide the typist. Before the typed materials were filed under conventional categories they were proof-read and corrected. Large sections of the data have been consulted from time to time in the preparation of articles and monographs. Thus, constant handling of the material over a long period has made me thoroughly familiar with it and increasingly conscious of the principal Lipan doctrines and postulates that were affirmed. When I decided to test the theory of themes by applying it to this particular body of material, I again gave the entire set of notes a close and uninterrupted reading so that I might appreciate the extensions and ramifications of any theme recognized in an early phase of the survey. It was only after this that I systematically worked through the data, brought together the items of belief and behavior that seemed to be inspired by a common affirmation or incentive, and endeavored to express the ruling and unifying doctrine as a statement that I have called a theme. I had no idea how many themes would result from this treatment. I could not foresee what proportion of the material would be found to be an expression of one or another of the themes and so would be absorbed and utilized by

means of this method. The approach has been thoroughly experimental and, in terms of execution, largely inductive.

In a description of a culture in terms of themes, particularly in an outline summary account such as this, the emphasis is bound to be upon ideology, values, and stimuli to activity rather than upon an inventory of techniques of manufacture and material possessions. By the very definition of a theme, the point of departure must be the warm, normative, subjective aspects of the culture rather than the practical, objective facets that Merton, following Alfred Weber and R. M. MacIver, has given the technical term "civilization." The apparent slighting of items relating to geographical setting, technology, and material culture may disturb those who are used to the orthodox ethnographic tradition and who expect to learn early in any study of a native people what plants they use, how they tan skins, and how they fashion weapons. Actually, a full exposition based on the themal approach would provide the details of material culture and technical proficiency, though, to my mind, this is not its primary task. For instance, a complete discussion of the moral-social virtue of industry (theme 17) would necessarily indicate what industrious men and women are trained to do and would consequently offer a clear picture of the division of labor and the nature of the daily tasks.

One other introductory comment may be in order. Because themes are generalizations from many particulars and because many of them have an abstract and philosophical flavor, they may be confused by some with ideal rather than actualized or expected patterns of behavior. It must therefore be emphasized again that the themes listed below are distilled from the details of the culture as it functioned or is alleged to have functioned and therefore represent requirements and guides to action and not merely pious hopes.

*Theme 1. The Elements of the Universe Are Actually or Potentially Animate and Personified*

The traditional "history" of the Lipan begins in an underworld at a time when animals, birds, plants, and rocks were also people and all shared a universal language. The elements of the natural world did not assume their present forms until the "people" of the underworld had emerged and were traveling sunwise around the surface of the world. Then it was, for instance, that the Juniper People halted their journey at a certain spot and the gay necklaces of green beads they wore became the juniper berries that the Lipan have gathered for food ever since. The earth to which the people of the emergence came is described as a woman, and those who live upon her body

are considered to be her children.<sup>1</sup> Large rocks are her teeth. Earthquakes occur when she becomes excited, when she is dissatisfied with the weather.

The sun and the moon, too, traveled for a time with the people of the emergence. Male characteristics are attributed to the sun, and, in his personified guise, he is identified with Enemy Slayer, the culture hero. The moon is most often thought of as a woman and is associated with Changing Woman, the culture heroine and the mother of the culture hero. Before they left the people of the emergence, these two promised that they would always keep moving in the heavens, guiding and watching over those with whom they had journeyed. The sun, in particular, is a model of industry and virtue. He never tires of telling earthlings, "Do not lie in bed; get up when I do." The morning glow is the sign that he is mixing his paints. Early in the morning he daubs his face with red ochre and starts out. In summer he travels closer to the earth, in winter farther away; therefore winter is the most dangerous as well as the most inclement of the seasons. In summer he travels slowly, causing the days to be long and giving the plants which sustain man a chance to grow. But if the people are practicing sorcery and courting evil, Sun grows angry and it becomes unseasonably hot or cold. Should the misbehavior persist, the sun, who hates sorcery above all things, hides his face and an eclipse occurs. Then the old people bring the pegs which are used to stake out hides and shake them together so that the sun's wrath will not be felt close by. . . .

All this is but a sampling from the rich store of tale and belief emphasizing the animate and human attributes of objects and beings of the earth and skies. Consequently, in terms of interest and desire, it is a small, intimate universe in which the Lipan dwell: Consciousness, human characteristics, and concern for the people of earth bring the mightiest and most remote elements close. On the other hand, the familiar, the small, and the inert are magnified in importance by the tradition that they were once powerful and alive and may become so again to the discerning. Vitality, power, animation are not formally fixed and immutable. They are like beams of light that shine now here, now there. The feelings, attitudes, and place of all things must be considered, for to the very end of his days the Lipan does not know what may yet succor him and what may be instrumental in his undoing.

<sup>1</sup> Very few Lipan survive today, and many traits of the aboriginal culture are no longer practiced. To prevent confusion and to obviate the necessity for constant change of tense, however, the historical present will be used throughout in describing Lipan culture.



*Theme 2. The Universe Is Pervaded by Diffuse Supernatural Power,  
Which May Become Specific for Those Psychologically Prepared to  
Receive It*

The objects, forces, and beings of the Lipan world usually become animate or personified in order to aid the deserving or to punish the erring. The aid offered a human being may be for the occasion only or it may consist in the granting of a ceremony which insures supernatural help in recurring crises. A ceremony properly performed is a claim on the help of the source from which it came. Therefore particular ceremonies are extremely useful for specific tasks or occasions. A shaman who has a power grant and a ceremony from the buffalo, for instance, conducts his ritual before a buffalo hunt. A person who knows a ceremony from the horse or from some creature associated with the horse, such as the cowbird, conducts a curing rite when someone has fallen from a horse or requires his good luck with horses restored. Thus supernatural power is so funneled to the human scene that it offers assistance and relief in most contexts within the range of Lipan experience. Accordingly, appeals to supernatural power are an indispensable adjunct to any important undertaking. . . .

*Theme 3. Life and the Life Forces Are Constantly Threatened by  
Evil and Danger*

Lipan reaction and behavior are marked by a strong consciousness of the evils and dangers that beset men. In fact, many of the activities to which the Lipan devote an enormous amount of energy and thought are protective in nature. The recognition of evil and danger is woven into the very fabric of sacred legend and the Lipan world view. When the Lipan emerged from the underworld they were greeted by hostile monsters as well as by kindly supernaturals. A Monster Buffalo, a Monster Owl, and Monster Eagles were among those who had to be vanquished before the earth was inhabitable for man. Another bird of "evil influence" is the raven, who willed that there should be death, who set himself against the life forces, and is responsible even today for much sickness and contamination. The ghosts of the dead seek to draw their relatives to them at an untimely age, and contact with corpses or graves may give them their opportunity to accomplish this. Malicious and envious tribesmen (witches) may use supernatural power for evil rather than for good ends; power itself, when personified may make suggestions that only witches would gratify. Water Monsters wait in rivers and water holes to seize and drown the unwary man or horse. Any contact with

a snake or even with the spot where a snake has been can cause serious affliction. The Thunder or Lightning People are easily moved to jealousy, anger, and retaliation, and their children are "mean" and mischievous, often "shooting thunder flints" (sending lightning) without provocation. Even dreams may be a frightening signal of sickness or death; dreams of fire, of flood, of the dead, or of witches are particularly disconcerting.

In this manner the Lipan have personified the general insecurities they feel and the inimical forces they can not name or can not directly control. But they have a vivid appreciation of the more explicit and observable dangers, too, and a constant uneasiness about them. The likelihood of injuries during the realistic slingshot and arrow battles by means of which the youths are trained is freely admitted, but the practice is explained with the simple comment, "When there are many enemies the boys have to be trained to be active." In a story told to the boys to impress them with the need for being wary of all strangers, "Foolish People" are described who meet a first group of Comanches on a friendly basis and later, without careful investigation, erroneously assume that a second group is approaching in the same frame of mind.

The general tension and anxiety the Lipan feel is perhaps illustrated by the following incident. In order to tease his sleeping wife an old man discharged his grandson's tamped popgun near her head. Unfortunately the old woman was dreaming that she and her relatives were being pursued by Mexican soldiers. In her dream the noise of the toy became a Mexican gun discharged at her head. She kicked and writhed so long and was so hard to arouse from sleep that her husband was seriously alarmed.

*Theme 4. Security and Harmony Are Attained Largely through the Conquest of Fear and Danger and through Self-discipline*

If the Lipan are acutely conscious of the evils and dangers that beset them, it must also be said that they do not quail from pitting themselves sturdily against their seen and unseen foes. Because their enemies are strong and remorseless, they train their young men to meet them on equal terms. They take the view that from the beginning life has been a series of hazards to be overcome. It was Enemy Slayer, the Lipan culture hero and exemplar, who, immediately after the emergence, slew the man-eating monsters in a series of marvelous adventures. In those early days the large and evil animals challenged the smaller, kindlier ones to a contest of "hidden ball." A victory for the large animals would have meant perpetual darkness for mankind. By their shouts and threats the protagonist of unending night attempted to

frighten and weaken their opponents, but the small animals persisted and finally saw the sun rise on their triumph. Since that time man has had to war relentlessly against the seemingly superior forces that seek to intimidate and overawe him. . . .

This fierce determination to conquer fear and to overcome danger has resulted in a cult of bravery that has many expressions. Lipan children allow pith from the inside of the sunflower stalk to burn to ash on their outstretched arms in order to demonstrate their courage. Or they touch burning brands to one another's fingernails, in the same spirit. Another test is to drop a turtle in hot coals, and to use the bare hands to keep it covered. If the animal escapes from the embers, the child is said to be a coward who will run away from danger. Obviously it takes a brave youngster to continue to heap hot coals on with his bare hands.

Fearlessness ranks high on the scale of Lipan social virtues, as we shall point out later. There is a whole cycle of stories about a fearless man who overcomes a buffalo bull, puts a fierce peccary to flight, insults a Mexican army officer, and even kicks a snake—though he becomes ill as a result of this last rash act. A favorite story recounts the deed of a small group of Lipan men who lead a strong raiding party of the enemy away from the camps and out into the plains. There they face the foe and beat him off.

The requirements of the manly code invade the social realm as well. A badly deceived husband finds his wife and her lover sleeping together. He shoots an arrow into the man but before he can kill the woman she wakes and pleads for her life. He feels compassion and affection for his erring wife surge over him, but with a determined effort, he conquers his "weakness" and executes her too.

*Theme 5. The Mastery of Life Forces Which Maintains Security Is a Result of Agreement and Compact and Consequently Imposes Restraints and Obligations*

In the Lipan view the struggle against evil and danger is an interminable one in which the hostile forces are at best controlled and modified rather than eliminated. Partial victories ending in truce and agreement are the rule; a disregard of the means by which evil is held in leash may loose misfortune upon the entire community again. The margin by which man maintains control over his destiny is a narrow one; he must constantly pacify elements of his world that would otherwise turn against him and upset the precarious favorable balance he has achieved. And so man must adhere rigorously to his

obligations, ritual and social. In order to keep on even terms with men and supernaturals he must exercise and enforce the restraints that prevent breaches of faith and conduct. He remains aware of his insecurity and modestly seeks to rally all beings and forces, great and small, to his cause.

This conception of the relation of man to his world is presented time and again in the most important Lipan traditions. In the tale of the slaying of the monsters by the culture hero, for example, Enemy Slayer, though he was mighty, gave to mankind an example in humility by requesting the aid of the tiny gopher in conquering the Monster Buffalo. When this monster had been vanquished it was allowed to live on in reduced size on condition that it would permit mankind to use its flesh and hide. Though the buffalo assented, it, too, exacted conditions. From these are derived the rules and ritual for hunting and butchering the buffalo. When these are violated, Buffalo has the right to hide from man and to withhold its flesh and skins. . . .

In short, there are many animals, supernaturals, and natural objects that have been forced to help mankind or that have agreed to help mankind, but they do so only at a price. Lipan who desire an ordered round of life and a minimum of insecurity agree and insist that the price be paid. Therefore this theme has become an important conservative force in Lipan culture, for few dare neglect the duties and the rites which insure an uninterrupted flow of services, sacrifices, and benefits from animals, natural forces, and the supernaturals.

*Theme 6. Socially Approved Contacts with the Supernatural Must Occur within the Limits of a Recognized Ritual Frame*

As we have seen, the Lipan are greatly concerned over the existence and persistence of evil and danger. They recognize that men may claim benevolence falsely and that some kinds of supernatural power may even prove malefic. Therefore, while the need for supernatural help and ceremony is keenly felt, it is quite as strongly urged that traffic with the supernatural should be carried on in terms of a recognized and reassuring pattern. . . .

As a result of this attitude, Lipan religious thought and behavior are held to a ritual frame that consists of a specific set of acts, references, and symbols, though they may be differently arranged and slightly varied according to the occasion.

In requesting a shaman to conduct his ceremony it is necessary to proffer him a cigarette or four ceremonial gifts. The gifts usually include tobacco and often suggest the nature of the ceremony desired and the shaman's source



of power. Thus, a bridle may be one of the gifts of supplication in requesting a ceremony for the purpose of repairing a mishap with a horse. The smoking of a cigarette or the acceptance of the gifts indicates the shaman's willingness to act.

The shaman will probably require that the structure in which he carries on his ceremony have the door facing the most important ritual direction, east. In whatever he does there is an association of color, direction, number, and sunwise circuit. In prayer, for instance, the east is mentioned first and is referred to as black; south comes next and is blue; the circuit continues to the west, which is named yellow; fourth and last is the north, ordinarily associated with white. As this suggests, four is the Lipan sacred number; what does not happen in fours or multiples of four can hardly be of ceremonial significance. . . .

*Theme 7. The Essentials of Tribal Existence Are Fixed and Ordered  
by Events of the Past, by Traditional Practices, or by Supernatural  
Sanction*

In the Lipan view life is less an adventure than a fulfillment. There are choices and alternatives, but the existence even of these is a result of predestination rather than of man's strivings. Life and death merge into a cycle that began in the underworld of legendary times and that is finally completed when the individual returns to the underworld at the end of his earthly term. Ritual is a reenactment. The traditional rites are conducted exactly as Enemy Slayer and other protectors and protagonists of the legendary period performed them, or they are carried on precisely as the supernaturals rehearse them in the vision experience fundamental to the power grant. The lens of consciousness is so adjusted that the Lipan see their own world in extremely sharp focus and consequently discern little else; they know what to expect and what to anticipate.

Accordingly Lipan culture seems to its carriers not only to be the time-honored way but also the inevitable way. The informant who undertook to explain to me the necessity for incessant fighting and raiding expressed this view perfectly. He pointed out that sooner or later enemies would come and steal Lipan horses. Those who suffered loss would go to the chief to complain, and a pursuit party would be organized. If its members overtook the raiders a fight would ensue. Conversely, when Lipan horses became too few in number, the herd of some alien tribe would be raided. The enemy would nearly always follow and must be outdistanced or outfought. These exploits would become a challenge or a cause for revenge and would lead to a cycle

of expeditions and reprisals. My informant saw no way in which this round of events could be arrested.

The Lipan speak often of a "path," "trail," or "way" of life. Thus, there are the well esteemed among them who "follow Enemy Slayer's way" or the inept who "follow Coyote's way." But whether a Lipan follows this trail or that, he is expected to remain in *some* beaten and well-recognized path. To be as foolish and fickle as Coyote is forgivable; to be aberrant in unfamiliar or unsanctioned ways is the real offense.

Great emphasis is laid upon the precedents through which norms of conduct were established and in terms of which proper behavior is rationalized. When Enemy Slayer contended against one of the monsters he sought the help of Lizard. Lizard created a path to the monster, stopping four times along the way to escape detection. By following this course without deviation and halting at the very same points, Enemy Slayer was able to reach and destroy his opponent. The lesson is patent: the past holds the clues to appropriate behavior, and it is only by the conscientious repetition of traditional ways that life's obstacles can be overcome. . . .

Even the common forms of perversity are attributed to occurrences in the distant past that have served as a model for the unworthy ever since. Because of the misbehavior of Coyote, the trickster, men swear falsely on occasion, disobey those in authority, seduce their neighbors' wives, and even commit incest. Thus is sin vouched for by tradition. In practice this means that the familiar or acknowledged foibles and lapses of mankind are usually accepted philosophically and with a reasonable amount of indulgence. The Lipan are not perfectionists. They recognize many paths of life, some of them admittedly devious since the first days of mankind.

*Theme 8. Within the Tribal Pattern Freedom of Choice for the Individual Is Respected and the Social Importance of the Individual Is Recognized*

The importance of pattern and the emphasis of the deeds of the heroes and supernaturals of the earliest epoch do not prevent a recognition and appreciation of individual differences by the Lipan. As we have seen, it is frankly asserted that some men follow Enemy Slayer's way and some follow Coyote's example. Enemy Slayer is a mighty warrior, raider, and hunter, but it is recognized that individual Lipan men vary markedly in ability in respect to these pursuits. Changing Woman is the paragon of womanly virtues and the ideal set before all Lipan girls, but that there are differences among women in the performance of the tasks that Changing Woman prescribed is no

secret. There are a great many indications that individuality, personality differences, and variations in ability and performance are expected, accepted, and respected.

Expressions of this theme play upon the individual from birth to death. In fact, the personality and disposition of the woman chosen to receive the child at birth are closely scrutinized; a woman who is lucky with children and liked by them is sought for the task. Not long afterward, when the ears of the child are pierced, the services of a person of similar qualifications are obtained.

Some personality traits qualify individuals for specific tasks and others prevent participation in certain activities. For instance, persons known to be quick-tempered are not permitted to take honey from a beehive; the bees, it seems, sense the irritability of their despoiler and become angry and negativistic too. Wide differences in bravery and in fighting and raiding ability are recognized as well. . . .

Even when a response is of a general rather than an individual character, personal rather than group ends may be involved. If someone calls a Lipan's personal name at a time of emergency, it is difficult for him to refuse assistance no matter what the cost or danger. If someone sings his ceremonial or even his social song without permission, he becomes very angry. If an unrelated person uses his personal property without his consent, trouble is likely to arise. . . .

It must be remembered, finally, that an individual does not have to participate in all group enterprises. If he wishes to accompany a war party he signifies this by joining the dance held the night before the expedition is to start. If he does not participate he is not expected to depart with the others. If he has no need for horses he sees no point in joining a raiding party. When an antelope hunt is being planned, a crude charcoal drawing of the animal is carried around to the various camps. Then those who wish to take part gather and organize the venture. A rabbit hunt is arranged in much the same manner. A Lipan engages in most of the fundamental activities of the tribe, for at the level of subsistence at which he lives there are few group enterprises which he can long ignore. But this is usually because of his needs and desires rather than because of a press for conformity.

*Theme 9. The Lipan Are Culturally Distinct from and Are Morally Superior to All Other Groups of People*

The Lipan are heirs to a tradition that breeds cultural isolation and ethnocentricity. It is their belief that when the people of the emergence traveled

around the earth, though the other strains grew faint-hearted or weary and halted their journey prematurely, they alone fulfilled their mission and reached the place of designation. It is admitted that *individual* Lipan sometimes act in a reprehensible or unworthy manner, but other Indians, white Americans, and Mexicans are said to show by their mass demonstrations of foolish and abandoned conduct that they "follow Coyote's way" as a *group*. Sweeping characterizations of other peoples, which label them "foolish," "braggarts," "dirty," unwilling to "listen to anything good," "mean," "enemies," and the like, come easily to the Lipan and are frequent in my notes.

As a result of this contrasting estimate of themselves as a group and of others, it is natural for the Lipan to believe in their cultural pre-eminence, creative power, and leadership. Even the existence of the Catholic church and the activities of the padre are attributed to the Lipan culture hero! According to the Lipan version, before he left the earth, Enemy Slayer built a church, called a padre to him, and instructed him to pray and to teach the people.

*Theme 10. Women Are Physically and Morally Weaker than Men,  
Are More Susceptible to Contaminating Influences than Are Men,  
and Are Themselves a Source of Contamination to Men*

The fundamental attitudes that Lipan culture fosters in regard to women are curiously ambivalent. The evidences of esteem and respect for women will be reviewed later. In this section only the penalties and handicaps under which women labor will be discussed.

Great emphasis is laid upon the greater strength and physical toughness of the male. In explanation of this it is said that the male fetus takes ten "moons" to form within the mother whereas the female fetus requires only nine. Men are expected to swim across rivers; women are pulled across in bull-boats. Women are discouraged from accompanying men on the warpath, for their dependence and weakness "make it all the harder." If enemies are sighted in time as they are approaching a Lipan encampment, the women and children are sent to the hills, where they can hide without complicating the task of the men.

Closely related to the greater physical weakness of the woman is her tendency toward excitability. In the stories and accounts, when news of the approach of enemies reaches the encampment, the women are portrayed as rushing about in panic to gather their possessions and break camp. The men, especially the leaders, seek to calm the women and issue orders. That the women occupy an inferior status is suggested also in the tendency of the men to insult each other by reference to the female sex. Nothing angers the



Lipan warriors more as they line up to fight their foes of the Plains than to be told in sign language that they are "just like women" or that they should "return home and do women's work." The Lipan fighting men hurl similar jeers at their foes.

The comparative weakness of the women is considered to extend to the moral sphere, as well. All traditional stories of unfaithfulness and perversion have women as the chief culprits.

Moreover, some of the less pleasant and desirable chores fall to the lot of the women. For instance, the woman sleeps on the side toward the fire; it is her duty to tend it and to rekindle it in the morning. In addition, there are a number of minor but interesting disqualifications levied against women. A woman may not play the musical bow. She may not approach the level place where the men play the hoop-and-pole game. She may not wear clothes made of skins smoked during the tanning process. She allows the men to keep track of time for all formal occasions.

As so often is the case, special cautions apply to women during pregnancy or at the time of menstruation. A pregnant woman is prohibited from watching the masked dancers perform. A menstruating woman must refrain from touching a man's hair lest she cause it to fall out. In fact she avoids contact with men as much as possible during the period, for men may become rheumatic as a result of touching or even of smelling menstrual blood. Menstruating women are expected to stay away from curing rites, for their presence only makes the condition of the patient worse. . . .

*Theme 11. Women Play an Important Part in the Social, Economic, and Religious Life of the Tribe*

In spite of the disabilities and restrictions to which women are subject, they play an important and recognized role in Lipan culture. It may very well be that some of the emphasis upon feminine weakness that has been noted functions to keep the women bound to the home, dutifully domestic, and at least partially dependent upon a body of male relatives. Yet it is well understood that the woman contributes generously to all phases of Lipan life. The gathering of the wild food plants with which she is occupied provides as much for the larder as does the hunting in which the man is engaged. Residence after marriage is matrilocal; it is the woman who acts as the stable nucleus of the new family unit. Sons depart from the paternal encampment at marriage. It is the girls who bring strong young men, the sons-in-law, to aid their father with his tasks. Consequently, the birth of girls is welcomed in a family and there is no inclination toward female infanticide.

If women suffer certain disadvantages, they enjoy many equalities and even have prerogatives, too. With the exceptions already discussed, women obtain supernatural power and perform ceremonies on a par with men. Because only women may make clay bowls for pipes, those that the men use in ceremonies must be obtained by them from women. The ceremony performed over a new tipi is entirely in the hands of women; it is an old woman who selects, blesses, and marks the poles and who sanctifies the beds and the firepit. At a birth all men and boys must stay away from the place of confinement; otherwise the woman in labor will have much trouble.

One of the most important Lipan rites is held over the pubescent girl. Much food is stored away well in advance for the event, and the ceremony is an occasion of general rejoicing on the part of the community that a girl has been reared to maturity. The maiden who is the central figure of the rite is called "Changing Woman" during this period and is considered to have power for things beneficial. Small children are brought to have their bodies pressed by her so that they may grow strong and straight. . . .

The Lipan woman is relatively secure in her marital and social position. The home, the household equipment, and her personal effects belong to her and are inviolate. She eats with her husband and is treated by him on a plane of equality. If a separation takes place and the man has left his possessions behind, the angry wife can simply throw his belongings out of the door. In case of divorce, children remain with the mother. A woman who learns that her husband is unfaithful can let him know of her discovery by killing his favorite horse. She is viewed sympathetically if she goes as far as to attack her rival physically. A woman is well protected from a husband's abuse or imposition by virtue of her residence among her own relatives. If the husband proves to be an indifferent son-in-law and a poor provider, his wife's relatives are likely to drive him away or to "take away the girl." If a man is mistreating his wife, her father and unmarried brothers can be expected to intervene and send the quick-tempered husband away. At the same time, they have no desire to lose the services of an industrious son-in-law and brother-in-law, and therefore they can be expected to defend the man and discipline the wife when the fault is clearly hers. . . .

*Theme 14. The Extended Domestic Family Is the Basic Social and Economic Unit and the One to Which First Allegiance and Duties of Revenge Are Due*

The extended family as it is defined and understood by the Lipan consists ideally of a man and woman, their unmarried daughters and sons, their mar-

ried daughters, and their sons-in-law. Therefore the women of the family camp-cluster or extended family are all blood kin, whereas some of the men are blood kin and some are united to the family through marriage. These affinal relatives are not indifferent to the family they left when they wed, but, as we shall presently see, Lipan society binds them to the family they join at marriage by obligations and sanctions extraordinarily demanding and uncompromising. Consequently, a Lipan is expected to resent an insult to the relatives by marriage with whom he lives as much as do the other members of the family. It is an affront to mention the name of the recently deceased before his blood relatives; it is more provocative still to do so in the hearing of his affinal relatives. In short, everything that is expected of a blood relative is required also of a relative by marriage, and a solidarity and common interest among its members are achieved that make of the extended family the basic productive and social unit of Lipan society.

The family, as it is defined above, is an autonomous and, as far as the band or tribe is concerned, a mobile unit. Its members may decide to stay behind the main body, to push ahead of the others, or to undertake some venture of their own. That they normally stay with or near a larger body of tribesmen is due to the greater security, livelier social life, and more frequent economic advantages that come from this course, and not because of orders from above.

In addition, the family is the most prominent functioning economic unit; together its members plan work and the utilization of the products acquired. Whether the women cook together or separately, no branch of the family goes hungry while another branch has food. The feeling of responsibility for family members is always close to the surface. In the myths and tales a common assertion of the father in respect to his food-getting activities is, "With this I feed my children."

The consciousness of family solidarity and responsibility fans out into all aspects of the culture. The child is considered to be reared by the family as a collectivity. In advising a grandchild, a grandparent often reminds him, "*We've* had a hard time to raise you." Marriage is obviously an agreement between families. When a boy hints that he is interested in a certain girl he is likely to be told, "We will try to get that girl for you." And the effort is a joint one, for the members of the group discuss strategy and together assemble the objects constituting the marriage gift. At the time the question is put to the girl's parents, they consult with the members of the extended family before announcing a decision. If the answer is in the affirmative, these relatives of the girl, as a reward for their contribution to her education and

growth, are allowed to divide the wedding presents among themselves. The interfamily understanding established at a marriage is one that should be honored as long as possible. If a married man dies, his unmarried brother should properly assume his place and his duties. When a married woman dies, her unmarried sister is expected to take her place.

The quest for supernatural power is not untouched by this theme. Power is often described as "something with which to watch over my children and my family." . . .

*Theme 17. Industry, Generosity, and Bravery Are the Cardinal Moral-Social Virtues*

There are a good many character traits and personal attributes that the Lipan rate highly. Truthfulness, wisdom, attention to etiquette, cheerfulness, piety, and modesty in women evoke commendation. But there are three moral-social virtues that are set aside from all others for special emphasis and notice. These are industry, generosity (kindness), and bravery. . . .

Those who guide the young never lose sight of the cardinal virtue of industry. At the birth of a male infant, the midwife holds him up and prays, "May he grow up to be well, to live long, and to become a good hunter and warrior." She prays that the girl child may be a "good worker." At the first moccasins ceremony a little boy is given a small bow and arrows so that he may excel in hunting; the girl receives an awl so that she will be proficient at sewing. The elders take care to channel children's play in the direction of adult work patterns. The mother seeks to interest the girl in "playing camp" and carrying wood, for example. As soon as a girl is considered old enough to handle fire safely, she is taught to cook. . . .

Generosity is another attribute that Lipan culture encourages and holds in great esteem. Any younger person who hesitates to contribute his full share of goods or services when he is called upon for help is told, "You'll get it again as you go along. When you are old you'll be helped too." If neighbors need assistance, parents and grandparents urge their children to volunteer aid; when sickness or trouble strikes nearby, girls are told to go to the disrupted household to carry water and wood, and boys are sent to care for the horses. It is a Lipan rule that a friendly visitor has to be fed, even if a horse must be killed to supply the meat. If the visitor's horse is tired and he must go on, he is given a substitute mount. If he has no horse and has a long and arduous journey ahead, he is presented with one. If his moccasins are worn out, he is supplied with new ones.

Men who return from raid or war with spoils keep relatively little for



themselves; at the victory dance they distribute most of what they have seized from the enemy, often to the poor and needy. Hunting customs are marked by canons of generosity too. When two men are hunting together, it is not the man who brings down the game but his companion who is entitled to the hide and as much of the meat as he wants. A successful hunter, if he is asked for food when he is going through the camps, is expected to honor the request without hesitation. Of course, those who take meat from the hunter usually exercise moderation and are guided by their actual needs, for they know that they are subject to similar demands when the situation is reversed. But the successful hunter ordinarily does not in the least resent these requests and is likely to distribute meat to surrounding camps as a neighborly gesture in any case.

It is not difficult to establish that bravery is one of the outstanding virtues recognized by the Lipan. We have already seen that Enemy Slayer, the culture hero, is essentially a warrior and a raider and is credited with establishing what is, in effect, a cult of bravery. The tests of fortitude and courage to which the growing child is subject and the Spartan rigors of the child training and hardening process have already been described. Lipan storytelling sessions are usually enlivened by accounts of the heroic deeds of Lipan fighters. To be called a coward, a "crow," or a "woman" or to be charged with avoiding danger because "you always want to live a little longer" is a provocation beyond endurance. As an example of how true Lipan act, the anecdote is told approvingly of a small group of Lipan whose horses were stolen by a much larger force of the enemy. Because of their superior numbers the enemy felt perfectly secure and moved eastward at a leisurely pace. But the Lipan said among themselves, "These people think we are cowards. Let's show them. Let's follow them and fight. Let's die bravely!" . . .

The Lipan explain that bravery and commendable exploits in war result from training, self-control, and decisiveness. These qualities are operative during peace as well as in time of battle. Therefore, those who can accept adversity in peacetime stoically or who show these admirable qualities in mastering a difficult domestic situation are said to have "a brave heart" also. Such a man was the one who, upon discovering that his wife was carrying on an affair with a rival, took his bow and arrows, went to the man's dwelling, and questioned him closely as to whether he cared for the woman and whether he would marry her if she were free. The man answered in the affirmative throughout. The husband then divorced the woman and bade the two marry. Had the rival indicated at any point that he was not infatuated over the woman but was merely enjoying himself at the expense of the husband's

reputation and prestige, the husband was prepared to kill him on the spot. By demonstrating that he controlled the situation and that he made the final decision, the husband, even though the episode ended without bloodshed, proved that he possessed "a great heart."

*Theme 20. Death, except of the Very Old or the Very Young, Is Extremely Contaminating to the Survivors, and the Corpse, the Grave, and the Ghost Inspire Intense Fear*

Death not only brings economic dislocation and personal grief but also a sense of contamination and anxiety. Whenever possible, an elderly person, preferably one with "ghost power," is hired to prepare and bury the corpse. If it can be managed, the burial takes place the very day of death. His personal property is buried with the dead person. What can not be carried to the grave is destroyed at the home. In a ceremony at the grave the deceased is requested to remain in the land of the dead and is urged to refrain from persecuting his living relatives. The burial party returns by a different route from the one it took to the grave; to do otherwise would be to invite the ghost to follow. After their return, the members of the burial party bathe themselves thoroughly.

Meanwhile the close relatives of the deceased destroy the dwelling in which the death occurred, burn the property of the dead, destroy any property of their own that was closely associated with the dead person, cut the ends of their hair and allow the rest of it to hang loose, discard their good clothes, and wail. They stay by themselves in semi-isolation for four or eight days. All the dwellings of the encampment are moved for a short distance in the opposite direction from the burial site. The relatives burn sage, scatter ashes, and engage in other practices aimed at keeping the ghost at a distance. If necessary they hire a shaman to conduct a purification rite. Relatives will not utter the name of the dead, and others may not mention the name in their presence. A relative will even refrain for some time from using the kinship term by which he has addressed the deceased.

This studied effort to eliminate any mention of the dead and to destroy any object that would remind one of him has for its purpose the prevention of the return of the ghost. To think of the dead too often, to dream of the deceased, to venture too near a grave, or even to whistle at night "draws" ghosts. And since a person who sees a dead relative is himself doomed to die soon, this is additional cause for terror. It is the practice of ghosts to invite their relatives to join them; they offer food to the living, and if this is eaten, the one who has tasted the food of the underworld must relinquish this life. There-

fore, a ghost experience evokes the greatest uneasiness. States of extreme anxiety, fainting, hysterical seizures, and insanity are usually diagnosed as "ghost sickness." The ghosts of witches plague the living through the medium of owls. The hoot of an owl shortly after a death is therefore one of the most ominous and frightening of sounds. In the call of the owl, a Lipan listener hears a human voice and often recognizes the message of a departed relative.

The devastating fear and contamination that ordinarily accompany death are greatly relaxed when the deceased is an infant or a very old person. Apparently, the infant has not yet suffered social injuries that his ghost must avenge; the aged person has presumably shed his grudges as the years have passed over him and as physical weakness has grown upon him. . . .

## BRONISLAW MALINOWSKI

IN the following selection from his *Sex and Repression in Savage Society* (1927), Bronislaw Malinowski is only partly concerned with the functionalist approach which his later, more theoretical writings systematically developed. Here, in fact, resonances are struck with most if not all of the writers so far considered. *Sex and Repression* reveals both the field anthropologist and the theorist at work. Malinowski, as another anthropologist has written, saw his science also as an art, "the art of seeing perceptively a human and social situation . . . [and] of taking a warm interest in the particular while seeking in it the universal." Starting out with the biological and physiological denominators common to all humans, Malinowski shows how, among the Melanesians and among modern occidentals, they have been accommodated in highly contrasting cultural systems. He then follows the circle through to the point at which cultural norms impinge upon the growing child. In defining culture, and the ways in which men are shaped by the one into which they are born, Malinowski is led to a distinction—reminiscent of Dewey's speculations on "human nature"—between insistent "instincts" and plastic "tendencies." Correlative to this distinction is another between animal "gregariousness" and human "sociality," which takes Malinowski into concluding generalizations about the uniqueness of human social organization—and suggests a parallel with Cassirer's sign-users and symbol-users. Still another point to be noted is Malinowski's awareness of Sigmund Freud and of the psychological dimensions of individual adjustment within differing cultures.



### SEX AND REPRESSION IN SAVAGE SOCIETY

#### *Part I: The Formation of a Complex*

#### CHAPTER II: THE FAMILY IN FATHER-RIGHT AND MOTHER-RIGHT

. . . A few words will be necessary to introduce the Trobriand Islanders of North-Eastern New Guinea (or North-Western Melanesia) who will form the other term of our comparison, besides our own culture.

These natives are matrilineal, that is, they live in a social order in which kinship is reckoned through the mother only, and succession and inheritance

---

This selection has been reprinted from Bronislaw Malinowski, *Sex and Repression in Savage Society* (pp. 8–22, 23–36, 38–48, 59, 66–73, 184–192, 218–224, Humanities Press, N.Y., reprint edition 1953) by permission of the publisher,



descend in the female line. This means that the boy or girl belongs to the mother's family, clan and community: the boy succeeds to the dignities and social position of the mother's brother, and it is not from the father but from the maternal uncle or maternal aunt, respectively, that a child inherits its possessions.

Every man and woman in the Trobriands settles down eventually to matrimony, after a period of sexual play in childhood, followed by general licence in adolescence, and later by a time when the lovers live together in a more permanent intrigue, sharing with two or three other couples a communal "bachelor's house." Matrimony, which is usually monogamous, except with chiefs, who have several wives, is a permanent union, involving sexual exclusiveness, a common economic existence, and an independent household. At first glance it might appear to a superficial observer to be the exact pattern of marriage among ourselves. In reality, however, it is entirely different. To begin with, the husband is not regarded as the father of the children in the sense in which we use this word; physiologically he has nothing to do with their birth, according to the ideas of the natives, who are ignorant of physical fatherhood. Children, in native belief, are inserted into the mother's womb as tiny spirits, generally by the agency of the spirit of a deceased kinswoman of the mother. Her husband has then to protect and cherish the children, to "receive them in his arms" when they are born, but they are not "his" in the sense that he has had a share in their procreation.

The father is thus a beloved, benevolent friend, but not a recognized kinsman of the children. He is a stranger, having authority through his personal relations to the child, but not through his sociological position in the lineage. Real kinship, that is identity of substance, "same body," exists only through the mother. The authority over the children is vested in the mother's brother. Now this person, owing to the strict taboo which prevents all friendly relations between brothers and sisters, can never be intimate with the mother, or therefore with her household. She recognizes his authority, and bends before him as a commoner before a chief, but there can never be tender relations between them. Her children are, however, his only heirs and successors, and he wields over them the direct *potestas*.<sup>1</sup> At his death his worldly goods pass into their keeping and during his lifetime he has to hand over to them any special accomplishment he may possess—dances, songs, myths, magic and crafts. He also it is who supplies his sister and her household with food, the greater part of his garden produce going to them. To the father, therefore, the children look only for loving care and tender companionship. Their

<sup>1</sup> [*Power of ruling.*]

mother's brother represents the principle of discipline, authority, and executive power within the family.

The bearing of the wife towards her husband is not at all servile. She has her own possessions and her own sphere of influence, private and public. It never happens that the children see their mother bullied by the father. On the other hand, the father is only partially the bread-winner, and has to work mainly for his own sisters, while the boys know that when they grow up they in turn will have to work for their sisters' households.

Marriage is patrilocal: that is, the girl goes to join her husband in his house and migrates to his community, if she comes from another, which is in general the case. The children therefore grow up in a community where they are legally strangers, having no right to the soil, no lawful pride in the village glory; while their home, their traditional centre of local patriotism, their possessions, and their pride of ancestorship are in another place. Strange combinations and confusion arise, associated with this dual influence.

From an early age boys and girls of the same mother are separated in the family, owing to the strict taboo which enjoins that there shall be no intimate relations between them, and that above all any subject connected with sex should never interest them in common. It thus comes about that though the brother is really the person in authority over the sister, the taboo forbids him to use this authority when it is a question of her marriage. The privilege of giving or withholding consent, therefore, is left to the parents, and the father—her mother's husband—is the person who has most authority, in this one matter of his daughter's marriage.

The great difference in the two family types which we are going to compare is beginning to be clear. In our own type of family we have the authoritative, powerful husband and father backed up by society. We have also the economic arrangement whereby he is the bread-winner, and can—nominally at least—withhold supplies or be generous with them at his will. In the Trobriands, on the other hand, we have the independent mother and her husband, who has nothing to do with the procreation of the children, and is not the bread-winner, who cannot leave his possessions to the children, and has socially no established authority over them. The mother's relatives on the other hand are endowed with very powerful influence, especially her brother, who is the authoritative person, the producer of supplies for the family, and whose possessions the sons will inherit at his death. Thus the pattern of social life and the constitution of the family are arranged on entirely different lines from those of our culture.

It might appear that while it would be interesting to survey the family life in a matrilineal society, it is superfluous to dwell on our own family life, so intimately known to everyone of us and so frequently recapitulated in recent psycho-analytic literature. We might simply take it for granted. But first of all, it is essential in a strict comparative treatment to keep the terms of the comparison clearly before our eyes; and then, since the matrilineal data to be given here have been collected by special methods of anthropological field work, it is indispensable to cast the European material into the same shape, as if it had been observed by the same methods and looked at from the anthropological point of view. I have not . . . found in any psycho-analytic account any direct and consistent reference to the social milieu, still less any discussion of how the nuclear complex and its causes vary with the social stratum in our society. Yet it is obvious that the infantile conflicts will not be the same in the lavish nursery of the wealthy bourgeois as in the cabin of the peasant, or in the one-room tenement of the poor working-man. Now just in order to vindicate the truth of the psycho-analytic doctrine, it would be important to consider the lower and the ruder strata of society, where a spade is called a spade, where the child is in permanent contact with the parents, living and eating in the same room and sleeping in the same bed, where no "parent substitute" complicates the picture, no good manners modify the brutality of the impact and where the jealousies and petty competitions of daily life clash in hardened though repressed hostility.

It may be added that when we study the nuclear complex and its bed-rock of social and biological actuality in order to apply it to the study of folklore, the need of not neglecting the peasant and the illiterate classes is still more urgent. For the popular traditions originated in a condition more akin to that of the modern Central and Eastern European peasant, or of the poor artisan, than to that of the overfed and nervously overwrought people of modern Vienna, London, or New York.

In order to make the comparison stand out clearly I shall divide the history of childhood into periods, and treat each of them separately, describing and comparing it in both societies. The clear distinction of stages in the history of family life is important in the treatment of the nuclear complex, for psycho-analysis—and here really lies one of its chief merits—has brought to light the stratification of the human mind, and shown its rough correspondence to the stages in the child's development. The distinct periods of sexuality, the crises, the accompanying repressions and amnesias in which some memories are relegated to the unconscious—all these imply a clear division of the child's life into periods. For the present purpose it will be enough to dis-

tinguish four periods in the development of the child, defined by biological and sociological criteria.

1. *Infancy*, in which the baby is dependent for its nourishment on the mother's breast and for safety on the protection of the parent, in which he cannot move independently nor articulate his wishes and ideas. We shall reckon this period as ranging from birth to the time of weaning. Among savage peoples, this period lasts from about two to three years. In civilized communities it is much shorter—generally about one year only. But it is better to take the natural landmarks to divide the stages of childhood. The child is at this time physiologically bound up with the family.

2. *Babyhood*, the time in which the offspring, while attached to the mother and unable to lead an independent existence, yet can move, talk, and freely play round about her. We shall reckon this period to take up three or four years, and thus bring the child to the age of about six. This term of life covers the first gradual severing of the family bonds. The child learns to move away from the family and begins to be self-sufficient.

3. *Childhood*, the attainment of relative independence, the epoch of roving about and playing with other children. This is the time also when in all branches of humanity and in all classes of a society the child begins in some way or other to become initiated into full membership of the community. Among some savages, the preliminary rites of initiation begin. Among others and among our own peasants and working people, especially on the Continent, the child begins to be apprenticed to his future economic life. In Western European and American communities children begin their schooling at this time. This is the period of the second severing from family influences, and it lasts till puberty, which forms its natural term.

4. *Adolescence*, between physiological puberty and full social maturity. In many savage communities, this epoch is encompassed by the principal rites of initiation, and in other tribes it is the epoch in which tribal law and order lay their claim on the youth and on the maiden. In modern civilized communities it is the time of secondary and higher schooling, or else of the final apprenticeship to the life task. This is the period of complete emancipation from the family atmosphere. Among savages and in our own lower strata it normally ends with marriage and the foundation of a new family.

#### CHAPTER III: THE FIRST STAGE OF THE FAMILY DRAMA

It is a general characteristic of the mammals that the offspring is not free and independent at birth, but has to rely for its nourishment, safety, warmth, cleanliness and bodily comfort on the care of its mother. To this correspond



the various bodily arrangements of mother and child. Physiologically there exists a passionate instinctive interest of the mother in the child, and a craving of the suckling for the maternal organism, for the warmth of her body, the support of her arms and, above all, the milk and contact of her breast. At first the relation is determined by the mother's selective passion—to her only her own offspring is dear, while the baby would be satisfied with the body of any lactant woman. But soon the child also distinguishes, and his attachment becomes as exclusive and individual as that of the mother. Thus birth establishes a link for life between mother and child.

This link is first founded on the biological fact that young mammals cannot live unaided, and thus the species depends for its survival on one of the strongest instincts, that of maternal love. But society hastens to step in and to add its at first feeble decree to the powerful voice of nature. In all human communities, savage or civilized, custom, law and morals, sometimes even religion, take cognizance of the bond between mother and offspring, usually at as early a stage as the beginning of gestation. The mother, sometimes the father also, has to keep various taboos and observances, or perform rites which have to do with the welfare of the new life within the womb. Birth is always an important social event, round which cluster many traditional usages, often associated with religion. Thus even the most natural and most directly biological tie, that between mother and child, has its social as well as its physiological determination, and cannot be described without reference to the influence exercised by the tradition and usage of the community.

Let us briefly summarize and characterize these social co-determinants of motherhood in our own society. Maternity is a moral, religious and even artistic ideal of civilization, a pregnant woman is protected by law and custom, and should be regarded as a sacred object, while she herself ought to feel proud and happy in her condition. That this is an ideal which can be realized is vouched for by historical and ethnographical data. Even in modern Europe, the orthodox Jewish communities of Poland keep it up in practice, and amongst them a pregnant woman is an object of real veneration, and feels proud of her condition. In the Christian Aryan societies, however, pregnancy among the lower classes is made a burden, and regarded as a nuisance; among the well-to-do people it is a source of embarrassment, discomfort, and temporary ostracism from ordinary social life. Since we thus have to recognize the importance of the mother's pre-natal attitude for her future sentiment towards her offspring, and since this attitude varies greatly with the milieu and depends on social values, it is important that this sociological problem should be studied more closely.

At birth, the biological patterns and the instinctive impulses of the mother are endorsed and strengthened by society, which, in many of its customs, moral rules and ideals, makes the mother the nurse of the child, and this, broadly speaking, in the low as in the high strata of almost all nations of Europe. Yet even here in a relation so fundamental, so biologically secured, there are certain societies where custom and laxity of innate impulses allow of notable aberrations. Thus we have the system of sending the child away for the first year or so of its life to a hired foster mother, a custom once highly prevalent in the middle classes of France; or the almost equally harmful system of protecting the woman's breasts by hiring a foster mother, or by feeding the child on artificial food, a custom once prevalent among the wealthy classes, though to-day generally stigmatized as unnatural. Here again the sociologist has to add his share in order to give the true picture of motherhood, as it varies according to national, economic and moral differences.

Let us now turn to consider the same relation in a matrilineal society on the shores of the Pacific. The Melanesian woman shows invariably a passionate craving for her child, and the surrounding society seconds her feelings, fosters her inclinations and idealizes them by custom and usage. From the first moments of pregnancy, the expectant mother is made to watch over the welfare of her future offspring by keeping a number of food taboos and other observances. The pregnant woman is regarded by custom as an object of reverence, an ideal which is fully realized by the actual behaviour and feelings of these natives. There exists an elaborate ceremony performed at the first pregnancy, with an intricate and somewhat obscure aim, but emphasizing the importance of the event and conferring on the pregnant woman distinction and honour.

After the birth, mother and child are secluded for about a month, the mother constantly tending her child and nursing it, while certain female relatives only are admitted into the hut. Adoption under normal circumstances is very rare, and even then the child is usually given over only after it has been weaned, nor is it ever adopted by strangers, but by nearest relatives exclusively. A number of observances, such as ritual washing of mother and child, special taboos to be kept by the mother, and visits of presentation, bind mother and child by links of custom superimposed upon the natural ones.

Thus in both societies, to the biological adjustment of instinct there are added the social forces of custom, morals and manners, all working in the same direction of binding mother and child to each other, of giving them full scope for the passionate intimacy of motherhood. This harmony between

social and biological forces ensures full satisfaction and the highest bliss. Society co-operates with nature to repeat the happy conditions in the womb, broken by the trauma of birth. . . .

We find a much greater difference in the fatherhood of the patriarchal and matrilineal family at this period, and it is rather unexpected to find that in a savage society, where the physical bonds of paternity are unknown, and where mother right obtains, the father should yet stand in a much more intimate relation to the children than normally happens among ourselves. For in our own society, the father plays a very small part indeed in the life of a young infant. By custom, usage, and manners, the well-to-do father is kept out of the nursery, while the peasant or working man has to leave the child to his wife for the greater part of the twenty-four hours. He may perhaps resent the attention which the infant claims, and the time which it takes up, but as a rule he neither helps nor interferes with a small child.

Among the Melanesians "fatherhood," as we know, is a purely social relation. Part of this relation consists in his duty towards his wife's children; he is there "to receive them into his arms" . . . ; he has to carry them about when on the march the mother is tired, and he has to assist in the nursing at home. He tends them in their natural needs, and cleanses them, and there are many stereotyped expressions in the native language referring to fatherhood and its hardships, and to the duty of filial gratitude towards him. A typical Trobriand father is a hard-working and conscientious nurse and in this he obeys the call of duty, expressed in social tradition. The fact is, however, that the father is always interested in the children, sometimes passionately so, and performs all his duties eagerly and fondly.

Thus, if we compare the patriarchal and the matrilineal relation at this early stage, we see that the main point of difference lies with the father. In our society, the father is kept well out of the picture, and has at best a subordinate part. In the Trobriands, he plays a much more active role, which is important above all because it gives him a far greater scope for forming ties of affection with his children. In both societies there is found with a few exceptions, little room for conflict, between the biological trend and the social conditions.

#### CHAPTER IV: FATHERHOOD IN MOTHER-RIGHT

We have now reached the period when the child is already weaned, when it is learning to walk and begins to speak. Yet biologically it is but slowly gaining its independence from the mother's body. It clings to her with un-

diminished, passionate desire for her presence, for the touch of her body and the tender clasp of her arms.

This is the natural, biological tendency, but in our society, at one stage or another, the child's desires are crossed and thwarted. Let us first realize that the period upon which we now enter is introduced by the process of weaning. By this the blissful harmony of infantile life is broken, or at least modified. Among the higher classes, weaning is so prepared, graduated and adjusted that it usually passes without any shock. But among women of the lower classes, in our society, weaning is often a painful wrench for the mother and certainly for the child. Later on, other obstacles tend to obtrude upon the intimacy of the mother with the child, in whom at that stage a notable change is taking place. He becomes independent in his movements, can feed himself, express some of his feelings and ideas, and begins to understand and to observe. In the higher classes, the nursery arrangements separate the mother from the child in a gradual manner. This dispenses with any shock, but it leaves a gap in the child's life, a yearning and an unsatisfied need. In the lower classes, where the child shares the parents' bed, it becomes at a certain time a source of embarrassment and an encumbrance, and suffers a rude and more brutal repulsion.

How does savage motherhood on the coral islands of New Guinea compare at this stage with ours? First of all, weaning takes place much later in life, at a time when the child is already independent, can run about, eat practically everything and follow other interests. It takes place, that is, at a moment when the child neither wants nor needs the mother's breast any more, so that the first wrench is eliminated.

"Matriarchate," the rule of the mother, does not in any way entail a stern, terrible mother-virago. The Trobriand mother carries her children, fondles them, and plays with them at this stage quite as lovingly as at the earlier period, and custom as well as morals expects it from her. The child is bound to her, also, according to law, custom and usage, by a closer tie than is her husband, whose rights are subservient to those of the offspring. The psychology of the intimate marital relations has therefore a different character, and the repulsion of the child from the mother by the father is certainly not a typical occurrence, if it ever occurs at all. Another difference between the Melanesian and the typical European mother is that the former is much more indulgent. Since there is little training of the child, and hardly any moral education; since what there is begins later and is done by other people, there is scarcely room for severity. This absence of maternal discipline precludes



on the one hand such aberrations of severity as are sometimes found among us; on the other hand, however, it lessens the feeling of interest on the part of the child, the desire to please the mother, and to win her approval. This desire, it must be remembered, is one of the strong links of filial attachment among us, and one which holds great possibilities for the establishment of a permanent relation in later life.

Turning now to the paternal relation we see that, in our society, irrespective of nationality or social class, the father still enjoys the patriarchal status.<sup>2</sup> He is the head of the family and the relevant link in the lineage, and he is also the economic provider. As an absolute ruler of the family, he is liable to become a tyrant, in which case frictions of all sorts arise between him and his wife and children. The details of these depend greatly on the social milieu. In the wealthy classes of Western civilization, the child is well separated from his father by all sorts of nursery arrangements. Although constantly with the nurse, the child is usually attended to and controlled by the mother, who, in such cases, almost invariably takes the dominant place in the child's affections. The father, on the other hand, is seldom brought within the child's horizon, and then only as an onlooker and stranger, before whom the children have to behave themselves, show off and perform. He is the source of authority, the origin of punishment, and therefore becomes a bogey. Usually the result is a mixture; he is the perfect being for whose benefit everything has to be done; and, at the same time, he is the "ogre" whom the child has to fear and for whose comfort, as the child soon realizes, the household is arranged. The loving and sympathetic father will easily assume the former role of a demi-god. The pompous, wooden, or tactless one will soon earn the suspicion and even hate of the nursery. In relation to the father, the mother becomes an intermediary who is sometimes ready to denounce the child to the higher authority, but who at the same time can intercede against punishment.

The picture is different, though the results are not dissimilar, in the one-room and one-bed households of the poor peasantry of Central and Eastern Europe, or of the lower working classes. The father is brought into closer contact with the child, which in rare circumstances allows of a greater affection, but usually gives rise to much more acute and chronic friction. When a father returns home tired from work, or drunk from the inn, he naturally

<sup>2</sup> Here again I should like to make an exception with regard to the modern American and British family. The father is in process of losing his patriarchal position. As conditions are in flux, however, it is not safe to take them into consideration here. Psycho-analysis cannot hope, I think, to preserve its "Oedipus complex" for future generations, who will only know a weak and hen-pecked father. For him the children will feel indulgent pity rather than hatred and fear!

vents his ill-temper on the family, and bullies mother and children. There is no village, no poor quarter in a modern town, where cases could not be found of sheer, patriarchal cruelty. From my own memory, I could quote numerous cases where peasant fathers would, on returning home drunk, beat the children for sheer pleasure, or drag them out of bed and send them into the cold night.

Even at best, when the working father returns home, the children have to keep quiet, stop rowdy games and repress spontaneous, childish outbursts of joy and sorrow. The father is a supreme source of punishment in poor households also, while the mother acts as intercessor, and often shares in the treatment meted out to the children. In the poorer households, moreover, the economic role of provider and the social power of the father are more quickly and definitely recognized, and act in the same direction as his personal influence.

The role of the Melanesian father at this stage is very different from that of the European patriarch. . . . He is not the head of the family, he does not transmit his lineage to his children, nor is he the main provider of food. This entirely changes his legal rights and his personal attitude to his wife. A Trobriand man will seldom quarrel with his wife, hardly ever attempt to brutalize her, and he will never be able to exercise a permanent tyranny. Even sexual co-habitation is not regarded by native law and usage as the wife's duty and the husband's privilege, as is the case in our society. The Trobriand natives take the view, dictated by tradition, that the husband is indebted to his wife for sexual services, that he has to deserve them and pay for them. One of the ways, the chief way, in fact, of acquitting himself of this duty is by performing services for her children and showing affection to them. There are many native sayings which embody in a sort of loose folk-lore these principles. In the child's infancy the husband has been the nurse, tender and loving; later on in early childhood he plays with it, carries it, and teaches it such amusing sports and occupations as take its fancy.

Thus the legal, moral and customary tradition of the tribe and all the forces of organization combine to give the man, in his conjugal and paternal role, an entirely different attitude from that of a patriarch. And though it has to be defined in an abstract manner, this is by no means a mere legal principle, detached from life. It expresses itself in every detail of daily existence, permeates all the relations within the family, and dominates the sentiments found there. The children never see their mother subjugated or brutalized or in abject dependence upon her husband, not even when she is a commoner married to a chief. They never feel his heavy hand on themselves; he is not

their kinsman, nor their owner, nor their benefactor. He has no rights or prerogatives. Yet he feels, as does every normal father all over the world, a strong affection for them; and this, together with his traditional duties, makes him try to win their love, and thus to retain his influence over them.

Comparing European with Melanesian paternity, it is important to keep in mind the biological facts as well as the sociological. Biologically there is undoubtedly in the average man a tendency towards affectionate and tender feelings for his children. But this tendency seems not to be strong enough to outweigh the many hardships which children entail on a parent. When, therefore, society steps in and in one case declares that the father is the absolute master, and that the children should be there for his benefit, pleasure and glory, this social influence tilts the balance against a happy equilibrium of natural affection and natural impatience of the nuisance. When, on the other hand, a matrilineal society grants the father no privileges and no right to his children's affections, then he must earn them, and when again, in the same uncivilized society, there are fewer strains on his nerves and his ambitions and his economic responsibilities, he is freer to give himself up to his paternal instincts. Thus in our society the adjustment between biological and social forces, which was satisfactory in earliest childhood, begins to show a lack of harmony later on. In the Melanesian society, the harmonious relations persist.

Father-right, we have seen, is to a great extent a source of family conflict, in that it grants to the father social claims and prerogatives not commensurate with his biological propensities, nor with the personal affection which he can feel for and arouse in his children. . . .

#### CHAPTER V: INFANTILE SEXUALITY

. . . A careful observer of European children, and one who has not forgotten his own childhood, has to recognize that at an early age, say, between three and four, there arises in them a special sort of interest and curiosity. Besides the world of lawful, normal and "nice" things, there opens up a world of shame-faced desires, clandestine interests and subterranean impulses. The two categories of things, "decent" and "indecent," "pure" and "impure," begin to crystallize, categories destined to remain throughout life. In some people the "indecent" becomes completely suppressed, and the right values of decency become hypertrophied into the virulent virtue of the puritan, or the still more repulsive hypocrisy of the conventionally moral. Or the "decent" is altogether smothered through glut in pornographic satisfaction, and

the other category develops into a complete pruriency of mind, not less repulsive than hypocritical "virtue" itself.

In the second stage of childhood which we are now considering, that is according to my scheme from an age of about four to six years, the "indecent" centres round interests in excretory functions, exhibitionism and games with indecent exposure, often associated with cruelty. It hardly differentiates between the sexes, and is little interested in the act of reproduction. Anyone who has lived for a long time among peasants and knows intimately their childhood will recognize that this state of affairs exists as a thing normal, though not open. Among the working classes things seem to be similar. Among the higher classes "indecencies" are much more suppressed, but not very different. . . .

How does the newly awakened infantile sexuality or infantile indecency influence the relation to the family? In the division between things "decent" and "indecent," the parents, and especially the mother, are included wholly within the first category, and remain in the child's mind absolutely untouched by the "indecent." The feeling that the mother might be aware of any prurient infantile play is extremely distasteful to the child, and there is a strong disinclination to allude in her presence or to speak with her about any sexual matters. The father, who is also kept strictly outside the "indecent" category, is, moreover, regarded as the moral authority whom these thoughts and pastimes would offend. For the "indecent" always carries with it a sense of guilt. . . .

In Melanesia, we find an altogether different type of sexual development in the child. That the biological impulses do not essentially differ, seems beyond doubt. But I have failed to find any traces of what could be called infantile indecencies, or of a subterranean world in which children indulge in clandestine pastimes centring round excretory functions or exhibitionism. The subject naturally presents certain difficulties of observation, for it is hard to enter into any personal communication with a savage child, and if there were a world of indecent things as amongst ourselves, it would be as futile to inquire about it from an average grown-up native as from a conventional mother, father, or nurse in our society. But there is one circumstance which makes matters so entirely different among these natives that there is no danger of making a mistake: this is that with them there is no repression, no censure, no moral reprobation of infantile sexuality of the genital type when it comes to light at a somewhat later stage than the one we are now considering—at about the age of five or six. So if there were any earlier inde-



cency, this could be as easily observed as the later genital stage of sexual play.

How can we then explain why among savages there is no period of what Freud calls "pre-genital," "anal-erotic" interest? We shall be able to understand this better when we discuss the sexuality of the next stage in the child's development, a sexuality in which native Melanesian children differ essentially from our own.

#### CHAPTER VI: APPRENTICESHIP TO LIFE

We enter now on the third stage of childhood, commencing between the ages of five and seven. At this period a child begins to feel independent, to create its own games, to seek for associates of the same age, with whom it has a tendency to roam about unencumbered by grown-up people. This is the time when play begins to pass into more definite occupations and serious life interests.

Let us follow our parallel at this stage. In Europe, entrance into school or, among the uneducated classes, some sort of preliminary apprenticeship to an economic occupation removes the child from the influence of the family. The boy or girl lose to some extent their exclusive attachment to the mother. With the boy, there frequently takes place at this period a transference of sentiment to a substitute mother, who for the time being is regarded with some of the passionate tenderness felt for the mother, but with no other feelings. Such transference must not be confused with the much later tendency of adolescent boys to fall in love with women older than themselves. At the same time, there arises a desire for independence from the all-possessive intimacy of maternal interest, which makes the child withhold its absolute confidence from the parent. Among the peasants and lower classes, the process of emancipation from the mother takes place earlier than in the higher, but it is similar in all essentials. When the mother is deeply attached to the child, especially to the boy, she is apt to feel a certain amount of jealousy and resentment at this emancipation and to put obstacles in its way. This usually makes the wrench only more painful and violent.

The children on the coral beaches of the Western Pacific show a similar tendency. This appears there even more clearly, for the absence of compulsory education and of any strict discipline at this age allows a much freer play to the natural inclinations of infantile nature. On the part of the mother there is in Melanesia, however, no jealous resentment or anxiety at the child's new-found independence, and here we see the influence of the lack of any deep, educational interest between mother and child. At this stage, the children in the Trobriand archipelago begin to form a small juvenile community

within the community. They roam about in bands, play on distant beaches or in secluded parts of the jungle, join with other small communities of children from neighbouring villages, and in all this, though they obey the commands of their child-leaders, they are almost completely independent of the elders' authority. The parents never try to keep them back, to interfere with them in any way or to bind them to any routine. At first, of course, the family still retains a considerable hold over the child, but the process of emancipation progresses gradually and constantly in an untrammelled, natural manner.

In this there is a great difference between European conditions, where the child often passes from the intimacy of the family to the cold discipline of the school or other preliminary training, and the Melanesian state of affairs where the process of emancipation is gradual, free and pleasant.

And now what about the father at this stage? In our society—here again excluding certain modern phases of family life in Britain and America—he still represents the principle of authority within the family. Outside, at school, in the workshop, at the preliminary manual labour which the child of peasants is often set to do, it is either the father in person or his substitute who wields the power. In the higher classes at this stage, the very important process of conscious formation of paternal authority and of the father ideal takes place. The child begins now to comprehend what it had guessed and felt before—the father's established authority as the head of the family, and his economic influence. The ideal of his infallibility, wisdom, justice, and might is usually in varying degrees and in different ways inculcated in the child by the mother or the nurse in religious and moral teaching. Now the role of an ideal is never an easy one, and to maintain it in the intimacy of daily life is a very difficult performance indeed, especially for one whose bad tempers and follies are not repressed by any discipline. Thus no sooner is the father ideal formed than it begins to decompose. The child feels at first only a vague malaise at his father's bad temper or weakness, a fear of his wrath, a dim feeling of injustice, perhaps some shame when the father has a really bad outburst. Soon the typical father-sentiment is formed, full of contradictory emotions, a mixture of reverence, contempt, affection and dislike, tenderness and fear. It is at this period of childhood that the social influence due to patriarchal institutions makes itself felt in the child's attitude towards the male parent. Between the boy and his father the rivalries of successor and superseded, and . . . mutual jealousies . . . , crystallize more distinctly and make the negative elements of the father-to-son relation more predominant than in the case of father-to-daughter.

Among the lower classes, the process of the idealization of the father is

cruder but not less important. As I have already said, the father in a typical peasant household is openly a tyrant. The mother acquiesces in his supremacy and imparts the attitude to her children, who reverence and at the same time fear the strong and brutal force embodied in their father. Here also a sentiment composed of ambivalent emotion is formed, with a distinct preference of the father for his female children.

What is the father's role in Melanesia? Little need be said about it at this stage. He continues to befriend the children, to help them, to teach them what they like and as much as they like. Children, it is true, are less interested in him at this stage and prefer, on the whole, their small comrades. But the father is always there as a helpful adviser, half playmate, half protector.

Yet at this period the principle of tribal law and authority, the submission to constraint and to the prohibition of certain desirable things enters the life of a young girl or boy. But this law and constraint are represented by quite another person than the father, by the mother's brother, the male head of the family in a matriarchal society. He it is who actually wields the *potestas* and who indeed makes ample use of it.

His authority, though closely parallel to that of the father among ourselves, is not exactly identical with it. First of all his influence is introduced into the child's life much later than that of the European father. Then again, he never enters the intimacy of family life, but lives in another hut and often in a different village, for, since marriage is patrilocal in the Trobriands, his sister and her children have their abode in the village of the husband and father. Thus his power is exercised from a distance and it cannot become oppressive in those small matters which are most irksome. He brings into the life of the child, whether boy or girl, two elements: first of all, that of duty, prohibition and constraint: secondly, especially into the life of the boy, the elements of ambition, pride and social values, half of that, in fact, which makes life worth living for the Trobriander. The constraint comes in, in so far as he begins to direct the boy's occupations, to require certain of his services and to teach him some of the tribal laws and prohibitions. Many of these have already been inculcated into the boy by the parents, but the *kada* (mother's brother) is always held up to him as the real authority behind the rules.

A boy of six will be solicited by his mother's brother to come on an expedition, to begin some work in the gardens, to assist in the carrying of crops. In carrying out these activities, in his maternal uncle's village and together with other members of his clan, the boy learns that he is contributing to the *butura* of his clan; he begins to feel that this is his own village and own

people; to learn the traditions, myths and legends of his clan. The child at this stage also frequently co-operates with his father, and it is interesting to note the difference in the attitude he has toward the two elders. The father still remains his intimate; he likes to work with him, assist him and learn from him; but he realizes more and more that such co-operation is based on goodwill and not on law, and that the pleasure derived from it must be its own reward, but that the glory of it goes to a clan of strangers. The child also sees his mother receiving orders from her brother, accepting favours from him, treating him with the greatest reverence, crouching before him like a commoner to a chief. He gradually begins to understand that he is his maternal uncle's successor, and that he will also be a master over his sisters, from whom at this time he is already separated by a social taboo forbidding any intimacy.

The maternal uncle is, like the father among us, idealized to the boy, held up to him as the person who should be pleased, and who must be made the model to be imitated in the future. Thus we see that most of the elements, though not all, which make the father's role so difficult in our society, are vested among the Melanesians in the mother's brother. He has the power, he is idealized, to him the children and the mother are subjected, while the father is entirely relieved of all these odious prerogatives and characteristics. But the mother's brother introduces the child to certain new elements which make life bigger, more interesting, and of greater appeal—social ambition, traditional glory, pride in his lineage and kinship, promises of future wealth, power, and social status.

It must be realized that at the time when our European child starts to find its way in our complex social relations, the Melanesian girl or boy also begins to grasp the principle of kinship which is the main foundation of the social order. These principles cut across the intimacy of family life and rearrange for the child the social world which up to now consisted for him of the extended circles of family, further family, neighbours and village community. The child now learns that he has to distinguish above and across these groups two main categories. The one consists of his real kinsmen, his *veyola*. To these belong in the first place his mother, his brothers and sisters, his maternal uncle and all their kinsmen. These are people who are of the same substance or the "same body" as himself. The men he has to obey, to co-operate with and to assist in work, war and personal quarrels. The women of his clan and of his kinship are strictly tabooed sexually for him. The other social category consists of the strangers or "outsiders," *tomaŋava*. By this name are called all those people who are not related by matrilineal ties, or



who do not belong to the same clan. But this group comprises also the father and his relations, male and female, and the women whom he may marry or with whom he may have love affairs. Now these people, and especially the father, stand to him in a very close personal relation which, however, is entirely ignored by law and morality. Thus we have on the one side the consciousness of identity and kinship associated with social ambitions and pride, but also with constraint and sexual prohibition; and on the other, in the relation to the father and his relatives, free friendship and natural sentiment as well as sexual liberty, but no personal identity or traditional bonds. . . .

#### CHAPTER VIII: PUBERTY

At an age varying with climate and race and stretching from about the ninth to the fifteenth year, the child enters upon the age of puberty. For puberty is not a moment or a turning point but a more or less prolonged period of development during which the sexual apparatus, the whole system of internal secretions and the organism in general are entirely recast. We cannot consider puberty as a *conditio sine qua non*<sup>3</sup> of sexual interest or even of sexual activities, since non-nubile girls can copulate and immature boys are known to have erections and to practise *immissio penis*. But undoubtedly the age of puberty must be regarded as the most important landmark in the sexual history of the individual.

Sex is, moreover, so intimately bound up at this stage with the other aspects of life that in this chapter we shall treat sexual and social matters together and not divide them as we did in the case of the two previous stages. In comparing here the Trobrianders of Melanesia with our own society, it is important to note that these savages have no initiation rites at puberty. . . .

. . . Puberty begins there earlier than with us, but at the same time, when it sets in boys and girls have already begun their sexual activities. In the social life of the individual, puberty does not constitute a sharp turning point as in those savage communities where initiation ceremonies exist. Gradually, as he passes to manhood, the boy begins to take a more active part in economic pursuits and tribal occupations, he is considered a young man (*ulatile*), and by the end of puberty he is a full member of the tribe, ready to marry and carry on all his duties as well as to enjoy his privileges. The girl, who at the beginning of puberty acquires more freedom and independence from her family, has also to do more work, amuse herself more intensely, and carry

<sup>3</sup> [*Indispensable condition.*]

on such duties, ceremonial, economic, and legal, as are entailed by full womanhood.

But the most important change, and the one which interests us most, is the partial break-up of the family at the time when the adolescent boys and girls cease to be permanent inmates of the parental home. For brothers and sisters, whose avoidance has begun long before in childhood, must now keep an extremely strict taboo, so that any possibility of contact while engaged in sexual pursuits must be eliminated. This danger is obviated by a special institution, the *bukumatula*. This name is given to special houses inhabited by groups of adolescent boys and girls. A boy as he reaches puberty will join such a house, which is owned by some mature youth or young widower and tenanted by a number of youths, from three to six, who are there joined by their sweethearts. Thus the parental home is drained completely of its adolescent males, though until the boy's marriage he will always come back for food, and will also continue to work for his household to some extent. A girl, on the rare nights of chastity when she is not engaged in one *bukumatula* or another, may return to sleep at home.

What is the attitude towards mother, father, sister or brother into which the sentiments of the Melanesian boy and girl crystallize at this important epoch? As with a modern European boy and girl, we see that at this period there is only a final cast, a consolidation of what has been in gradual formation during the previous stages of life. The mother, from whom the child has been weaned—in the widest sense of the word—remains still the pivotal point of all kinship and relationship for the rest of life. The boy's status in society, his duties and privileges, are determined with regard to her and her relatives. If no one else is there to provide for her, he will have to do it, while her house will always be his second home. Affection and attachment, prescribed by social obligations, remain also deeply founded in real sentiment, and when an adult man dies or suffers mishap, his mother will be the one to sorrow and her wailing will last longest and be most sincere. Yet there is little of the personal friendship, the mutual confidences and intimacy which is so characteristic of the mother-to-son relationship in our society. The detachment from the mother, carried out as we have seen at every stage more easily and more thoroughly than with us, with fewer premature wrenches and violent suppressions, is achieved in a more complete and harmonious manner.

The father at this time suffers a temporary eclipse. The boy, who as a child was fairly independent and became the member of the small, juvenile republic, gains now on the one hand the additional freedom of the *bukumatula*,

while on the other he becomes much more restricted by his various duties towards his *kada* (maternal uncle). He has less time and less interest left for the father. Later on, when friction with the maternal uncle makes its appearance, he turns, as a rule, to his father once more, and their life friendship then becomes settled. At this stage, however, when the adolescent has to learn his duties, to be instructed in traditions and to study his magic, his arts and crafts, his interest in his mother's brother, who is his teacher and tutor, is greatest and their relations are at their best.

There is one more important difference between the Melanesian boy's feeling for his parents and that of the educated boy in our own society. With us, when at puberty and with social initiation the new fiery vision opens before the youth, its glare throws a strange shadow on his previous warm feelings for mother and father. His own sexuality estranges him from his progenitors, embarrasses their relations and creates deep complications. Not so in the matrilineal society. The absence of the early indecency period and of the first struggles against parental authority; the gradual and open taking-up of sex ever since it first began to stir in the young blood; above all the attitude of benevolent onlookers which the parents take towards the sexuality of their young; the fact of the mother's withdrawing completely but gradually from the boy's passionate feelings; the father smiling his approval—all this brings about the fact that the intensification of sexuality at puberty exercises no direct influence upon the relation to the parents.

One relation, that between brother and sister, is, however, deeply affected by every increase of sexuality—especially at puberty. This taboo, which extends to all free association and excludes the motive of sex completely from the relations of the two, affects the sexual outlook of both in general. For in the first place it must be kept in mind that this taboo is the great sexual barrier in a man's life, beyond which it is illicit to trespass, and that it constitutes also the most important general moral rule. The prohibition, moreover, which starts in childhood with the separation of brothers and sisters and of which this separation always remains the main point, extends also to all other females of the same clan. Thus the sexual world is for the boy divided into two moieties: one of these, embracing the women of his own clan, is prohibited to him; the other, to which women of the remaining three clans belong, is lawful.

Let us compare now the brother-sister relation in Melanesia and Europe. With us, the intimacy of childhood gradually cools off and changes into a somewhat constrained relation, in which the sister is naturally but not completely divided from her brother by social, psychological and biological fac-

tors. In Melanesia, as soon as any intimacy in play or in childish confidences might spring up, the strict taboo sets in. The sister remains a mysterious being, always near yet never intimate, divided by the invisible yet all powerful wall of traditional command which gradually changes into a moral and personal imperative. The sister remains the only spot on the sexual horizon permanently hidden. Any natural impulses of infantile tenderness are as systematically repressed from the outset as other natural impulses are in our children, and the sister becomes thus "indecent" as an object of thought, interest and feeling, just as the forbidden things do for our children. Later on, as the personal experiences in sexuality develop, the veil of reserve separating the two thickens. Though they have constantly to avoid each other, yet, owing to the fact that he is the provider of her household, they must constantly keep one another in thought and attention. Such artificial and premature repression must have its results. The psychologists of the Freudian school could easily foretell them.

In all this I have spoken almost exclusively from the point of view of the boy. What is the configuration of the Melanesian girl's attitude to her family as it crystallizes at puberty? Roughly speaking, her attitude does not differ so much from that of her European counterpart as is the case with the boy. Just because of the brother and sister taboo, the Trobriand matriarchy touches the girl less than the boy. For, since her brother is strictly forbidden to take any interest in her sexual affairs, including her marriage, and her mother's brother has also to keep aloof from these matters, it is, strangely enough, her father who is her guardian as regards matrimonial arrangements. So that between father and daughter not quite an identical, but a very similar relation exists as with us. For among ourselves the friction between the female child and her father is normally small, and thus the relation approaches nearer to that found in the Trobriands between father and child. There, on the other hand, the intimacy between a grown-up man and an adolescent girl, who, be it remembered, is not considered his kinswoman, is fraught with some temptation. This is not lessened but increased by the fact that though the daughter is not actually tabooed by the laws of exogamy, yet sexual intercourse between the two is considered in the highest degree reprehensible, though it is never given the name of *suvasova*, which means breach of exogamy. The reason for this prohibition between father and daughter is, of course, simply that it is wrong to have sexual intercourse with the daughter of the woman with whom you co-habit. . . . Father-daughter incest happens in reality, though it hardly could be called an obsession, nor has it any echo in folk-lore.



With regard to her mother, the general course of the relation is more natural than that in Europe, though not essentially different. One point of difference there is: namely, that the exodus of the girl at puberty from the parental home and her numerous outside sex interests normally prevent the development of mother-daughter rivalries and jealousies, though they do not always preclude the occurrence of father-daughter incest. Thus, with the exception of her attitude to the brother, broadly speaking, sentiments similar to those in Europe are to be found in a Melanesian girl. . . .

### *Part IV: Instinct and Culture*

#### CHAPTER II: THE FAMILY AS THE CRADLE OF NASCENT CULTURE

The fundamental change in the mechanism of instinctive responses has to be studied upon the very subject matter of our present inquiry: the early forms of family life and the transition between animal and human family. Upon the human family are focused all psycho-analytic interests and the family is, in the opinion of an anthropological school to which the writer belongs, the most important group in primitive societies. The following comparison of courtship, mating, matrimonial relations and parental cares in animal and human societies respectively, will show in what sense the family must be considered as the cell of society, as the starting point of all human organization.

There is one point which must be settled before we can conveniently proceed with our argument. Very often it is assumed by anthropologists that humanity developed from a gregarious simian species and that man inherited from his animal ancestors the so-called "herd instincts." Now this hypothesis is entirely incompatible with the view here taken that common sociability develops by extension of the family bonds and from no other sources. Until it has been shown that the assumption of pre-cultural gregariousness is entirely unfounded; until a radical difference in nature is shown between human sociability, which is a cultural achievement, and animal gregariousness, which is an innate endowment, it is futile to show how social organization develops out of early kinship groups. Instead of having to face the "herd instinct" at every turn of our argument and show its inadequacy then and there, it is best to deal with this mistaken point of view from the outset.

It is idle, I believe, to consider the purely zoological question whether our pre-human ancestors lived in big herds and were endowed with the necessary innate tendencies which allow animals to co-operate in herds, or whether they lived in single families. The question we have to answer is whether any forms

of human organization can be derived from any animal types of herding; that is whether organized behaviour can be traced back to any forms of animal gregariousness or "herd-instinct."

Let us first consider animal gregariousness. It is a fact that a number of animal species are so constituted that they have to lead their life in more or less numerous groups, and that they solve the main problems of their existence by innate forms of co-operation. Can we say with regard to such animal species that they possess a specific "herd" or "gregarious" *instinct*? All competent definitions of instinct agree that it must mean a *fixed pattern of behaviour*, associated with certain *anatomical mechanisms* correlated to *organic needs* and showing a general *uniformity throughout the species*. The various specific methods by which animals carry on the process of search for food, of nutrition; the series of instincts which constitute mating, the rearing and education of offspring; the working of the various locomotive arrangements; the functioning of primitive defensive and offensive mechanisms,—these constitute instincts. In each we can correlate the instinct with an anatomical apparatus, with a physiological mechanism and a specific aim in the vast biological process of individual and racial existence. Throughout the species each individual will behave in an identical manner, provided that the conditions of its organism and the external circumstances are present to release the instinct.

What about gregariousness? It is interesting to note that we find the division of functions, the co-ordination of activities, and the general integration of collective life most pronounced among relatively low forms of animal life such as the insects, and also, perhaps, coral colonies. . . . But neither with the social insects nor with gregarious mammals do we find a specific anatomical outfit subserving any specific act of "herding." The collective behaviour of animals subserves all processes, it envelops all instincts, but it is not a specific instinct. It might be called an innate component, a general modification of all instincts which makes the animals of the species co-operate in most vital affairs. It is important to note that in all the collective behaviour of animals co-operation is governed by innate adaptations and not by anything which could be called social organization in the sense in which we apply this word to humanity. . . .

Thus man could not have inherited a gregarious *instinct*, which no animal possesses, but only a diffused "gregariousness." This would obviously mean that man has a general tendency to carry out certain adaptations by collective rather than individual behaviour, an assumption which would not help us very much in any concrete anthropological problem. Yet even the assumption

of a tendency towards gregariousness can be shown to be completely erroneous. For is there any tendency in man to carry out all important acts in common; or even any well-defined type of activity "gregariously"? He is capable indeed of developing his powers of co-operation indefinitely, of harnessing increasing numbers of his fellow creatures to one cultural task. But whatever type of activity be considered, man is also capable of carrying on his work in isolation if the conditions and the type of culture demand it. In the processes connected with nutrition and the satisfaction of bodily wants we can find every activity: food gathering, fishing, agriculture, performed either in groups or alone, by collective labour as well as by individual effort. In carrying out the propagation of the race man is capable of developing collective forms of sexual competition, of group licence side by side with strictly individual forms of courtship. The collective tending of offspring, found at least among insects, has no parallel in human societies, where we see individual parenthood devoted to the care of individual children. Again, while many ceremonies of religion and magic are performed in common, individual initiation rites, solitary experiences and personal revelation play as great a part in religion as do collective forms of worship. There is no more trace of gregarious tendencies in the domain of the *sacred* than in any other type of human culture. Thus scrutiny of cultural activities would reveal no gregarious tendencies of any sort. As a matter of fact, the further we go back the more the individual character predominates, at least in economic work. It never becomes quite solitary, however, and the stage of "individual search for food" postulated by certain economists seems to me to be a fiction: even at low levels organized activities run always side by side with individual effort. But there is no doubt that as culture advances individual activities gradually disappear from the economic field and are replaced by collective production on an enormous scale. We would have then a case of an "instinct" increasing with culture, which, as can be easily seen, is a *reductio ad absurdum*! <sup>4</sup>

Another way of approaching the question of the so-called "herd instinct" would be to examine the nature of the bonds which unite men into social groups. These bonds, whether political, legal, linguistic, or customary are one and all of an acquired character; in fact, it can be easily seen that there is no innate element in them at all. Take the bonds of speech which unite groups of people at all levels of culture and sharply distinguish them from those with whom it is impossible to communicate by word of mouth. Lan-

<sup>4</sup> [That is, an argument carried to the point of absurdity.]

guage is an entirely acquired bodily habit. It is not based on any innate apparatus, it is completely dependent upon the culture and the tradition of a tribe, that is upon elements which vary within the same species, and so cannot be specifically innate. It is clear, moreover, that no "language instinct" could have been inherited from our animal ancestors, who never communicated by a symbolic conventional code.

Whatever form of organized co-operation we take, we see after a brief scrutiny that it is based on cultural artefacts and governed by conventional norms. In the economic activities, man uses tools and proceeds according to traditional methods. The social bonds which unite economic co-operative groups are therefore based upon a completely cultural framework. The same refers to an organization for purposes of war, of religious ceremonial, of the enforcement of justice. Nature could not have endowed human beings with specific responses towards artefacts, traditional codes, symbolic sounds, for the simple reason that all these objects lie outside the domain of nature. The forms and forces of social organization are imposed upon a human community by culture and not by nature. There cannot be any innate tendency to run a locomotive or to use a machine gun, simply because these implements cannot have been anticipated by the natural conditions under which the human species has been biologically fashioned.

In all his organized behaviour man is always governed by those elements which are outside any natural endowment. Psychologically, human organization is based upon sentiments, that is complex built-up attitudes and not innate tendencies. Technically, human association is always correlated with artefacts, with tools, implements, weapons, material contrivances all of which extend beyond man's natural anatomical equipment. Human sociality is always a combination, a dove-tailing of legal, political, and cultural functions. It is not a mere identity of the emotional impulse, not a similarity of response to the same stimulus, but an acquired habit dependent upon the existence of an artificial set of conditions. . . .

To sum up, we can say that man obviously has to behave in common and that his organized behaviour is one of the corner-stones of culture. But while collective behaviour in animals is due to innate equipment, in man it is always a gradually built-up habit. Human *sociality* increases with culture, while if it had been mere *gregariousness* it should decrease or, at least, remain constant. The fact is that the essential foundation of culture lies in a deep modification of innate endowment in which most instincts disappear, and are replaced by plastic though directed tendencies which can be moulded



into cultural responses. The social integration of these responses is an important part of the process, but this integration is possible through the general plasticity of instincts and not through any specific gregarious tendency!

We may thus conclude that no type of human organization can be traced back to gregarious tendencies, still less to a specific "herd instinct." We shall be able to show that the necessary correlate of this principle is that the family is the only type of grouping which man takes over from the animal. In the process of transmission, however, this unit changes fundamentally with regard to its nature and constitution, though its form remains remarkably unaltered. The group of parents and children, the permanence of the maternal tie, the relation of father to his offspring, show remarkable analogies throughout human culture and in the world of higher animals. But as the family passes under the control of cultural elements, the instincts which have exclusively regulated it among pre-human apes become transformed into something which did not exist before man: I mean the cultural bonds of social organization. . . .

#### CHAPTER VI: THE PERSISTENCE OF FAMILY TIES IN MAN

The family life of mammals always lasts beyond the birth of the offspring and the higher the species the longer both parents have to look after their progeny. The gradual ripening of the child needs more protracted care and training on the part of both father and mother, and these have to remain united to look after the little ones. But in no animal species does the family last for life. As soon as the children are independent they leave the parents. This is in keeping with the essential needs of the species, for any association, with its corresponding ties, becomes a burden to animals unless it has some specific function to fulfill.

With man, however, new elements enter. Apart from the tender cares dictated by nature and endorsed by custom and tradition, there enters the element of cultural education. Not only is there a need of training instincts into full development, as in the animal instruction in food-gathering and specific movements, there is also the necessity of developing a number of cultural habits as indispensable to man as instincts are to animals. Man has to teach his children manual skill and knowledge in arts and crafts; language and the traditions of moral culture; the manners and customs which make up social organization.

In all this there is the need of special co-operation between the two generations, the older which hands on and the younger which takes over tradition. And here we see the family again as the very workshop of cultural develop-

ment, for continuity of tradition, especially at the lowest levels of development, is the most vital condition of human culture and this continuity depends upon the organization of the family. It is important to insist that with the human family this function, the maintenance of the continuity of tradition, is as important as the propagation of the race. For man could no more survive if he were deprived of culture than culture could survive without the human race to carry it on. Newer psychology teaches us, moreover, that the earliest steps of human training, those which happen within the family, are of an educational importance which has been completely overlooked by earlier students. But if the influence of the family is enormous at present, it must have been even greater at the beginnings of culture, where this institution was the only school of man and the education received was simple but had to be given with a vigour of outline and a strength of imperative not necessary at higher levels.

In this process of parental education by which the continuity of culture is maintained we see the most important form of division of functions in human society: that between giving the lead and taking it, between cultural superiority and inferiority. Teaching—the process of imparting technical information and moral values—requires a special form of co-operation. Not only must the parent have an interest in instructing the child, and the child an interest in being taught, but a special emotional setting is also necessary. There must be reverence, submission, and confidence on the one hand, tenderness, feeling of authority, and desire to guide on the other. Training cannot be done without some authority and prestige. The truths revealed, the examples given, the orders imposed will not reach their aim or command obedience unless they are backed up by those specific attitudes of tender subordination and loving authority which are characteristic of all sound parental relations to the child. These correlated attitudes are most difficult and most important in the relation between the son and the father. Owing to the vigour and initiative of the young and the conservative authority of the old male, there is a certain difficulty in the establishment of a permanent reverent attitude. The mother, as the nearest guardian and the most affectionate helpmate, usually finds no difficulties in the earlier stages of relation to children. In the relation between son and mother, however, which, if it is to continue harmonious, should remain one of submission, reverence, and subordination, there enter other disturbing elements at a later stage of life. . . .

The mature animal departs naturally from its parents. In man the need for more enduring bonds is indisputable. The education of the children, first of all, binds them to the family for a long period beyond their maturity. But

even the end of cultural education is not the final signal for dissolution. The contacts established for cultural training last longer, and they serve for the establishment of further social organization.

Even after a grown-up individual has left his parents and established a new household his relation to them remains active. In all primitive societies, without exception, the local community, the clan or the tribe, is organized by a gradual extension of family ties. The social nature of secret societies, totemic units and tribal groups is invariably based on courtship ideas, associated with local habitation by the principle of authority and rank, but with all this it is still definitely linked with the original family bond.

It is in this actual and empirical relationship between all wider social groupings on the one hand and the family on the other that we have to register the fundamental importance of the latter. In primitive societies the individual does build up all his social ties upon the pattern of his relation to father and mother, to brother and sister. In this, again, anthropologists, psycho-analysts and psychologists are fully in agreement, putting on one side the fantastic theories of Morgan and some of his followers. Thus the endurance of family ties beyond maturity is the pattern of all social organization, and the condition of co-operation in all economic, religious, and magical matters. This conclusion we reached in a previous chapter, where we examined the alleged gregarious instinct and found that there is neither an instinct nor a tendency towards "herding." But if social bonds cannot be reduced to pre-human gregariousness, they must have been derived from the development of the only relationship which man has taken over from his animal ancestors: the relationship between husband and wife, between parents and children, between brothers and sisters, in short the relationship of the undivided family.

This being so, we see that the endurance of family bonds and the corresponding biological and cultural attitude is indispensable not only for the sake of the continuity of tradition but also for the sake of cultural co-operation. And in this fact we have to register what is perhaps the deepest change in the instinctive endowment of animal and man, for in human society the extension of family bonds beyond maturity does not follow the instinctive pattern to be found among animals. We can no longer speak of plastic innate tendencies, for, since the family bonds extended beyond maturity do not exist in animals, they cannot be innate. Moreover the utility and function of life-long family bonds are conditioned by culture and not by biological needs. Parallel to this, we see that in animals there is no tendency to maintain the family beyond the stage of biological serviceability. In man,

culture creates a new need, the need to continue close relations between parents and children for the whole life. On the one hand this need is conditioned by the transmission of culture from one generation to another; on the other by the need of life-long endurance of bonds which form the pattern and starting-point for all social organization. The family is the biological grouping to which all kinship is invariably referred and which determines by rules of descent and inheritance the social status of the offspring. As can be seen, this relation never becomes irrelevant to a man and has constantly to be kept alive. Culture, then, creates a new type of human bond for which there is no prototype in the animal kingdom. And . . . in this very creative act, where culture steps beyond instinctive endowment and natural precedent, it also creates serious dangers for man. Two powerful temptations, the temptation of sex and that of rebellion, arise at the very moment of cultural emancipation from nature. Within the group which is responsible for the first steps in human progress there arise the two main perils of humanity: the tendency to incest and the revolt against authority.



## A. L. KROEBER AND CLYDE KLUCKHOHN

CONCERN with culture is so much a part of anthropology that the phrase "the science of culture" is often applied to that discipline. Yet anthropology is a young science, and, indeed, use of the term culture to denote its central subject matter is of comparatively recent origin. It was not until approximately the 1840's that the word culture acquired, in the German language, the general meaning now attributed to it in anthropological parlance. It was not until 1871 that Edward Tylor (1832-1917), the great pioneer in the systematic study of primitive peoples, gave it the definition in English which, historically, underlies contemporary scientific use of the term in most European tongues. His definition deserves repeating: "Culture . . . is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."

With this definition, culture, for the anthropologists, ceases to be a word exclusively applied to a special corpus of knowledge, or to a refined set of manners, or to a body of social values high in the ethical scale of Western civilization. Since, to the anthropologists, "uncultured man" is a contradiction in terms, all thoughts, feelings, and acts of man are equally products of culture. Toilet behavior or the sonata form are admitted without prejudice into the realm of cultural traits.

This conception of culture, presented as a simple definition, frequently strikes the student as obvious to the point of transparency. But its very breadth, while liberating the scientific observer of primitive societies from parochialism of outlook, gives rise to ambiguities and obscurities and has created a host of controversies which continue to be debated at the present time.

In the following selection, drawn from a paper by A. L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn (1952), the issues at stake in some of these controversies are reviewed and critically examined. In the process many of the fundamental questions which confront all students of man in society are raised.

A. L. Kroeber, born in New Jersey in 1876, received his Ph.D. from Columbia University in 1901 and was for twenty-seven years chairman of the Department of Anthropology at the University of California. He is recognized, even by those who have taken scholarly issue with him, as the dean of living American anthropologists. His incisive and original mind ranges over the fields of ethnography, culture history, and archaeology. Among his many books, *Peoples of the Philippines* (1919), *Anthropology* (1923), and *Configurations of Culture Growth* (1944) are notable. Clyde Kluckhohn was born in Iowa in 1905, was graduated from the University of Wisconsin, and in 1936 received his Ph.D. from Harvard, where he became professor of anthropology ten years later. His fields of special interest are the ethnology of the Navahos and anthropological theory; his best-known book is *Mirror for Man* (1949).



## GENERAL FEATURES OF CULTURE

*Historicity*

. . . Students of human life who pride themselves on being "scientific" and upon their rigor still tend, consciously or unconsciously, to hold the view of "science" set forth in Karl Pearson's famous *Grammar*. In other words, they not only take physics as their model but specifically nineteenth-century physics. Here problems of measurable incidence and intensity predominate. Such problems also have their importance in anthropology, but the most difficult and most essential questions about culture cannot be answered in these terms. As W. M. Wheeler is said to have remarked, "Form is the secretion of culture." Form is a matter of ordering, of arrangement, of emphasis. Measurement in and of itself will seldom provide a valid description of distinctive form. Exactly the same measurable entities may be present in precisely the same quantities, but if the sequences or arrangements of these entities differ, the configurations may have vastly different properties. . . .

Ethnographers have been rightly criticized for writing "The Hopi do (or believe) thus and so" without stating whether this generalization is based upon ten observations or a hundred or upon the statement of one informant or of ten informants representing a good range of the status positions in that society. No scientist can evade the problems of sampling, of the representativeness of his materials for the universe he has chosen to study. However, sampling has certain special aspects as far as cultural data are concerned. If an ethnographer asks ten adult middle-class Americans in ten different regions "Do men rise when ladies enter the room on a somewhat formal occasion?" and gets the same reply from all his informants, it is of no earthly use for him—so far as establishment of the normative middle-class pattern is concerned—to pull a random sample of a few thousand from the million American men in this class.

Confusion both on the part of some anthropologists and of certain critics of anthropological work has arisen from lack of explicit clarity as to what is encompassed by culture. Some anthropologists have described cultures as if culture included *only* a group's patterns *for* living, their conceptions of how specified sorts of people ought to behave under specified conditions. Critics

---

This selection has been reprinted from A. L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn, "General Features of Culture," in *Culture, a Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* (Papers of the Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, Vol. XLVII, No. 1, 1952, pp. 161-162, 167-179) by permission of the publisher.

of Ruth Benedict, for example, have assumed that she was making generalizations as to how *Zuñis* in fact do behave whereas, for the most part, she is talking of their "ideals" for behavior (though she doesn't make this altogether clear). In our opinion . . . culture includes *both* modalities<sup>1</sup> of actual behavior *and* a group's conscious, partly conscious, and unconscious designs for living. More precisely, there are at least three different classes of data: (1) a people's notions of the way things ought to be; (2) their *conceptions* of the way their group actually behaves; (3) what does in fact occur, as objectively determined. . . .

### *Causality*

. . . In a sense we are less optimistic than was Tylor eighty years ago when he wrote:

Rudimentary as the science of culture still is, the symptoms are becoming very strong that even what seems its most spontaneous and motiveless phenomena will, nevertheless, be shown to come within the range of distinct cause and effect as certainly as the facts of mechanics. . . .

. . . We do not [now] anticipate the discovery of cultural laws that will conform to the type of those of classical mechanics, though "statistical laws"—significant statistical distributions—not only are discoverable in culture and language but have been operated with for some two decades.

Nevertheless, cultural anthropologists, like all scientists, are searching for minimal causal chains in the body of phenomena they investigate. It seems likely at present that these will be reached—or at any rate first reached—by paths and methods quite different from those of the physical sciences of the nineteenth century. The ceaseless feedback between culture and personality and . . . other complexities . . . make any route through reductionism seem a very distant one indeed.

The best hope in the foreseeable future for . . . "explanation" of cultural phenomena seems to rest in the study of cultural forms and processes as such, largely—for these purposes—abstracted from individuals and from personalities. Particularly promising is the search for common denominators or pervasive general principles in cultures of which the culture carriers are often unaware or minimally aware. Various concepts (Opler's "themes"; Herskovits' "focus"; Kroeber's "configurations of culture growth"; and Kluckhohn's "implicit culture") have been developed for this kind of analysis, and a refinement and elaboration of these and similar approaches may make some

<sup>1</sup> This implies, of course, an abstraction from concrete events—not the behavior itself.

aspects of the behavior of individuals in a culture reducible to generalizations that can be stated with increased economy. The test of the validity of such "least common denominators" or "highest common factors" will, of course, be the extent to which they not only make the phenomena more intelligible but also make possible reasonably accurate predictions of culture change under specified conditions.

One attempts to understand, explain, or predict a system by reference to a relatively few organizing principles of that system. The study of culture is the study of regularities. After field work the anthropologist's first task is the descriptive conceptualization of certain trends toward uniformity in aspects of the behavior of the people making up a certain group. The anthropological picture of the explicit culture is largely as Firth has suggested "the sum total of *modes* of behavior." Now, however, anthropologists are trying to go deeper to reduce the wide range of regularities in a culture to a relatively few "premises," "categories," and "thematic principles" of the inferred or implicit culture. So far as fundamental postulates about structure are concerned, this approach resembles what factor analysts are trying to do. The methods, of course, are very different. . . .

. . . At present only the data of linguistics and of social organization are formulated with sufficient precision to permit of rigorous dissolution of elements into their constituent bundles of distinctive features. But there is abundant presumptive evidence that cultural categories are not a congeries; that there are principles which cut across. Aspects of given events are often clearly meaningful in various realms of culture: "economic," "social," "religious," and the like. The difficult thing is to work out a systematic way of making transformations between categories. . . .

The forms of the explicit culture may be<sup>2</sup> compared to the observable plan of a building. As Robert Lynd has said: "The significance of structure for a culture may be suggested by the analogy of a Gothic cathedral, in which each part contributes thrusts and weights relevant not only to itself alone but to the whole." Patterns are the framework, the girders of a culture. The forms of the implicit culture are more nearly analogous to the architect's conception of the total over-all effects he wishes to achieve. Different forms

<sup>2</sup> For some purposes a better simile is that of a large oriental rug. Here one can see before one the intricacy of patterns—the pattern of the whole rug and various patterns within this. The degree of intricacy of the patterns of the explicit culture tends to be proportional to the total content of that culture, as Kroeber has remarked: "Such a climax is likely to be defined by two characteristics: a larger content of culture; and a more developed or specialized organization of the content of the culture—in other words, more numerous elements and more sharply expressed and interrelated patterns. These two properties are likely to go hand in hand. A greater content calls for more definite organization; more organization makes possible the absorption of more content."



can be made from the same elements. It is as if one looks at a series of chairs which have identical proportions but which are of varying sizes, built of a dozen different kinds of wood, with minor ornamentations of distinct kinds. One sees the differences but recognizes a common element. Similarly, one may find in two individuals almost the same personality traits. Yet each has his own life style which differentiates the constellation of traits. So, also, a culture cannot be fully understood from the most complete description of its explicit surface. The organization of each culture has the same kind of uniqueness one finds in the organization of each personality.

Even a culture trait is an abstraction. A trait is an "ideal type" because no two pots are identical nor are two marriage ceremonies ever held in precisely the same way. But when we turn to those unconscious (i.e., unverb-  
balized) predispositions toward the definition of the situation which members of a certain social tradition characteristically exhibit, we have to deal with second-order or analytical abstractions. The patterns of the implicit culture are not inductive generalizing abstractions but purely inferential constructs. They are *thematic principles* which the investigator introduces to explain connections among a wide range of culture content and form that are not obvious in the world of direct observation. The forms of the implicit culture start, of course, from a consideration of data and they must be validated by a return to the data, but they unquestionably rest upon systematic extrapolation. When describing implicit culture the anthropologist cannot hope to become a relatively objective, relatively passive instrument. His role is more active; he necessarily puts something into the data. Whereas the trustworthiness of an anthropologist's portrayal of explicit culture depends upon his receptivity, his completeness, and his detachment and upon the skill and care with which he makes his inductive generalizations, the validity of his conceptual model of the implicit culture stands or falls with the balance achieved between sensitivity of scientific imagination and comparative freedom from preconception.

Normative and behavioral patterns are specifically oriented. The forms of the implicit culture have a more generalized application but they are, to use Benedict's phrase, "unconscious canons of choice." The implicit culture consists in those cultural themes of which there is characteristically no sustained and systematic awareness on the part of most members of a group.

The distinction between explicit and implicit culture is that of polar concepts, not of the all-or-none type. Reality, and not least cultural reality, appears to be a continuum rather than a set of neat, water-tight compartments. But we can seldom cope with the continuum as a whole, and the isolation

and naming of certain contrastive sections of the continuum is highly useful. It follows, however, that the theoretical structure does not collapse with the production of doubtful or transitional cases. In a highly self-conscious culture like the American which makes a business of studying itself, the proportion of the culture which is literally implicit in the sense of never having been overtly stated by any member of the society may be small. Yet only a trifling percentage of Americans could state even those implicit premises of our culture which have been abstracted out by social scientists. In the case of the less self-conscious societies the unconscious assumptions bulk large. They are what Whorf has called "background phenomena." What he says of language applies to many other aspects of culture: ". . . our psychic make-up is somehow adjusted to disregard whole realms of phenomena that are so all-pervasive as to seem irrelevant to our daily lives and needs . . . the phenomena of a language are to its own speakers largely . . . outside the critical consciousness and control of the speaker. . . ." This same point of view is often expressed by historians and others when they say: "The really important thing to know about a society is what it takes for granted."

These "background phenomena" are of extraordinary importance in human action. Human behavior cannot be understood in terms of the organism-environment model unless this be made more complex. No socialized human being views his experience freshly. His very perceptions are screened and distorted by what he has consciously and unconsciously absorbed from his culture. Between the stimulus and the response there is always interposed an intervening variable, unseen but powerful. This consists in the person's total apperceptive mass which is made up in large part of the more generalized cultural forms.

Let us take an example. If one asks a Navaho Indian about witchcraft, experience shows that more than seventy per cent will give almost identical verbal responses. The replies will vary only in this fashion: "Who told you to talk to me about witchcraft?" Here one has a behavioral pattern of the explicit culture, for the structure consists in a determinate interdigitation of linguistic symbols as a response to a verbal (and situational) stimulus.

Suppose, however, that we juxtapose this and other behavioral patterns which have no intrinsic interconnection. Unacculturated Navaho are uniformly careful to hide their faeces and to see to it that no other person obtains possession of their hair, nails, spit, or any other bodily part or product. They are likewise characteristically secretive about their personal names. All three of these patterns (as well as many others which might be mentioned) are manifestations of a *cultural enthymeme* (tacit premise) which may be in-

tellectualized as "fear of the malevolent activities of other persons." Only most exceptionally would a Navaho make this abstract generalization, saying, in effect, "These are all ways of showing our anxiety about the activities of others." Nevertheless, this principle does order all sorts of concrete Navaho behavior and, although implicit, is as much a part of Navaho culture as the explicit acts and verbal symbols. It is the highest common factor in diverse explicit forms and contents. It is a principle which underlies the structure of the explicit culture, which "accounts for" a number of distinct factors. It is neither a generalization *of* aspects of behavior (behavioral pattern) nor of forms for behavior (normative pattern)—it is a generalization *from* behavior. It looks to an inner coherence in terms of structuralizing principles that are taken for granted by participants in this culture as prevailing in the world. Patterns are forms—the implicit culture consists in interrelationships between forms, that is, of qualities which can be predicted only of two or more forms taken together.

Just as the forms of the explicit culture are configured in accord with the unconscious system of meanings abstracted by the anthropologist as cultural enthymemes, so the enthymemes may bear a relation to an over-summative principle. Every culture is a structure—not just a haphazard collection of all the different physically possible and functionally effective patterns of belief and action but an interdependent *system* with its forms segregated and arranged in a manner which is *felt* as appropriate. As Ruth Benedict has said, "Order is due to the circumstance that in these societies a principle has been set up according to which the assembled cultural material is made over into consistent patterns in accordance with certain inner necessities that have developed with the group." This broadest kind of integrating principle in culture has often been referred to as *ethos*. Anthropologists are hardly ready as yet to deal with the *ethos* of a culture except by means of artistic insight. The work of Benedict and others is suggestive but raises many new problems beside those of rigor and standardized procedures. . . .

### *Significance and Values*

We come now to those properties of culture which seem most distinctive of it and most important: its significance and its values. Perhaps we should have said "significance or values," for the two are difficult to keep separated and perhaps constitute no more than somewhat different aspects of the same thing.

First of all, significance does not mean merely ends. It is not teleological in

the traditional sense. Significance and values are of the essence of the organization of culture. It is true that human endeavor is directed toward ends; but those ends are shaped by the values of culture; and the values are felt as intrinsic, not as means. And the values are variable and relative, not predetermined and eternal, though certain universals of human biology and of human social life appear to have brought about a few constants or near-constants that cut across cultural differences. Also the values are part of nature, not outside it. They are the products of men, of men having bodies and living in societies, and are the structural essence of the culture of these societies of men. Finally, values and significances are "intangibles" which are "subjective" in that they can be internally experienced, but are also objective in their expressions, embodiments, or results.

Psychology deals with individual minds, and most values are the products of social living, become part of cultures, and are transmitted along with the rest of culture. It is true that each new or changed value takes its concrete origin (as do all aspects of culture) in the psychological processes of some particular individual. It is also true that each individual holds his own idiosyncratic form of the various cultural values he has internalized. Such matters are proper subjects of investigation for the psychologist, but values in general have a predominantly historical and sociocultural dimension. Psychology deals mainly with processes or mechanisms, and values are mental content. The processes by which individuals acquire, reject, or modify values are questions for psychological enquiry—or for collaboration between psychologists or sociologists. The main trend, however, is evidenced by the fact that social psychology, that bridge between psychology and sociology, recognizes a correspondence between values and attitudes, but has for the most part concerned itself, as social psychology, only with the attitudes and has abstracted from the values; much as individual psychology investigates the process of learning but not knowledge, that which is learned.

Values are primarily social and cultural: social in scope, parts of culture in substance and form. There are individual variants of cultural values and also certain highly personal goals and standards developed in the vicissitudes of private experience and reinforced by rewards in using them. But these latter are not ordinarily called values, and they must in any case be discriminated from collective values. Or, the place of a value in the lives of some persons may be quite different from that in the cultural scheme. Thus daydreaming or autoerotic practices may come to acquire high value for an individual while being ignored, ridiculed, or condemned socioculturally. These statements must not be construed as implying that values have a substantive



existence outside of individual minds, or that a collective mind containing them has any such substantive existence. The locus or place of residence of values or anything else cultural is in individual persons and nowhere else. But a value becomes a group value, as a habit becomes a custom or individuals a society, only with collective participation.

This collective quality of values accounts for their frequent anonymity, their seeming the spontaneous result of mass movement, as in morals, fashion responses, speech. Though the very first inception of any value or new part thereof must take place in an individual mind, nevertheless this attachment is mostly lost very quickly as socialization gets under way, and in many values has been long since forgotten. The strength of the value is, however, not impaired by this forgetting, but rather increased. The collectivization may also tend to decrease overt, explicit awareness of the value itself. It maintains its hold and strength, but covertly, as an implicit *a priori*, as a non-rational folkway. . . . This means in turn that functioning with relation to the value or standard becomes automatic, as in correct speech; or compulsive as in manners and fashion; or endowed with high-potential emotional charge as often in morals and religion; in any event, not fully conscious and not fully rational or self-interested.

Values are important in that they provide foci for patterns of organization for the material of cultures. They give significance to our understanding of cultures. In fact values provide the only basis for the fully intelligible comprehension of culture, because the actual organization of all cultures is primarily in terms of their values. This becomes apparent as soon as one attempts to present the picture of a culture without reference to its values. The account becomes an unstructured, meaningless assemblage of items having relation to one another only through coexistence in locality and moment—an assemblage that might as profitably be arranged alphabetically as in any other order; a mere laundry list.

Equally revealing of the significance of values is an attempt to present the description of one culture through the medium of the value patterns of another. In such a presentation, the two cultures will of course come out alike in structure. But since some of the content of the culture being described will not fit the model of the other culture, it will either have to be omitted from the description, or it will stultify this model by not fitting it, or it will be distorted in order to make it seem to fit. This is exactly what happened while newly discovered languages were being described in terms of Latin grammar.

For the same reason one need not take too seriously the criticism some-

times made of ethnographers that they do not sufficiently distinguish the ideal culture from the actual culture of a society: that they should specify what exists only ideally, at all points specify the numbers of their witnesses, the personalities of their informants, and so on. These rules of technical procedure are sound enough, but they lose sight of the main issue, which is not validation of detail but sound conception of basic structure. This basic structure, and with it the significant functioning, are much more nearly given by the so-called ideal culture than by the actual one. This actual culture can indeed be so over-documented that the values and patterns are buried. It might even be said without undue exaggeration that—adequate information being assumed as available—the description of the ideal culture has more significance than the actual if a choice has to be made. If the picture of the ideal culture is materially unsound or concocted, it will automatically raise doubts. But if the picture of the actual culture makes no point or meaning, it may be hard to inject more meaning from the statistical or personalized data available. In short, the “ideal” version of a culture is what gives orientation to the “actual” version.

Another way of saying this is that in the collection of information on a culture, the inquirer must proceed with empathy in order to perceive the cardinal values as points of crystallization. Of course this does not mean that inquiry should begin and end with empathy. Evidence and analysis of evidence are indispensable. But the very selection of evidence that will be significant is dependent on insight exercised during the process of evidence-collecting. What corresponds in whole-culture studies to the “hypothesis tested by evidence” in the experimental sciences is precisely a successful recognition of the value-laden patterns through which the culture is organized.

Values and significances are of course intangibles, viewed subjectively; but they find objective expression in observable forms of culture and their relations—or if one prefer to put it so, in patterned behavior and products of behavior.

It is this subjective side of values that led to their being long tabooed as improper for consideration by natural science. Instead, they were relegated to a special set of intellectual activities called “the humanities,” included in the “spiritual science” of the Germans. Values were believed to be eternal because they were God-given, or divinely inspired, or at least discovered by that soul-part of man which partakes somewhat of divinity, as his body and other bodies and the tangibles of the world do not. A new and struggling science, as little advanced beyond physics, astronomy, anatomy, and the rudiments of physiology as Western science still was only two centuries ago,

might cheerfully concede this reservation of the remote and unexplored territory of values to the philosophers and theologians and limit itself to what it could treat mechanistically. But a science of total nature cannot permanently concede anything which it can deal with by any of its procedures of analysis of phenomena and interpretation of evidence. The phenomena of culture are "as phenomenal" as those of physical or vital existence. And if it is true that values provide the organizing relations of culture, they must certainly be included in the investigation of culture.

How far values may ultimately prove to be measurable we do not know. It seems to us an idle question, as against the fact that they are, here and now, describable qualitatively, and are comparable, and their developments are traceable in some degree. Values are being dealt with, critically and analytically, not only by every sound social anthropologist, ethnographer, and archaeologist, but by the historians of the arts, of thought, of institutions, of civilization.

Anthropologists, up to this point, have probably devoted too little attention to the variability of cultural values and the existence of alternative value systems within the same culture, as well the general relation of cultural values to the individual. This regard for alternatives is necessary even in cultural studies *per se* because of the palimpsest nature of most cultures. As Spiro has remarked:

The ideal norms that upper-middle class Americans are violating in their sexual behavior are not their norms, but the norms of their ancestors, or the norms of contemporary lower-middle class Americans.

There is a good case for the view that any complex stratified or segmented culture requires balance, counterpoint, an "antagonistic" equilibrium between values. Florence Kluckhohn has put this argument well:

There is . . . too much stress—implied when not actually stated—upon the unitary character of value orientations. Variation for the same individual when he is playing different roles and variation between whole groups of persons within a single society are not adequately accounted for. More important still, the emphasis upon the unique of the variable value systems of different societies ignores the fact of the universality of human problems and the correlate fact that human societies have found for some problems approximately the same answers. Yet certainly it is only within a frame of reference which deals with universals that variation can be understood. Without this framework it is not possible to deal systematically with either the problem of similarity and difference as between the value systems of different societies or the questions of variant values within societies. . . .

However important it is to know what is dominant in a society at a given time, we shall not go far toward the understanding of the dynamics of that society

without paying careful heed to the variant orientations. That there be individuals who live in accordance with patterns which express variant rather than the dominantly stressed orientations is, it is maintained, essential to the maintenance of the society. *Variant values are, therefore, not only permitted but actually required.* It has been the mistake of many in the social sciences, and of many in the field of practical affairs as well, to treat all behavior and certain aspects of motivation which do not accord with the dominant values as deviant. It is urged that we cease to confuse the deviant who by his behavior calls down the sanctions of his group with the variant who is accepted and frequently required. This is especially true in a society such as ours, where beneath the surface of what has so often been called our compulsive conformity, there lies a wide range of variation.

In sum, we cannot emphasize too strongly the fact that if the essence of cultures be their patterned selectivity, the essence of this selectivity inheres in the cultural value system.

### *Values and Relativity*

We know by experience that sincere comparison of cultures leads quickly to recognition of their "relativity." What this means is that cultures are differently weighted in their values, hence are differently structured, and differ both in part-functioning and in total-functioning; and the true understanding of cultures therefore involves recognition of their particular value systems. Comparisons of cultures must not be simplistic in terms of an arbitrary or preconceived universal value system, but must be multiple, with each culture first understood in terms of its own particular value system and therefore its own idiosyncratic structure. After that, comparison can with gradually increasing reliability reveal to what degree values, significances, and qualities are common to the compared cultures, and to what degree distinctive. In proportion as common structures and qualities are discovered, the uniquenesses will mean more. And as the range of variability of differentiations becomes better known, it will add to the significance of more universal or common features—somewhat as knowledge of variability deepens significance of a statistical mean.

In attaining the recognition of the so-called relativity of culture, we have only begun to do what students of biology have achieved. The "natural classification" of animals and plants, which underlies and supplements evolutionary development, is basically relativistic. Biologists no longer group together plants by the simple but arbitrary factors of the number of their stamens and pistils, nor animals by the external property of living in sea, air, or land, but by degrees of resemblances in the totality of their structures.



The relationship so established then proves usually also to correspond with the sequential developments of forms from one another. It is evident that the comparative study of cultures is aiming at something similar, a "natural history of culture"; and however imperfectly as yet, is beginning to attain it.

It will also be evident from this parallel why so much of culture investigation has been and remains historical. . . . "A culture described in terms of its own structure" is in itself idiographic rather than nomothetic. And if a natural classification implicitly contains an evolutionary development—that is, a history—in the case of life, there is some presupposition that the same will more or less hold for culture. We should not let the customary difference in appellations disturb us. Just as we are in culture *de facto* trying to work out a natural classification and a developmental history without usually calling them that, we may fairly say that the results attained in historical biology rest upon recognition of the "relativity" of organic structures. . . .

It is evident that as cultures are relativistically compared, both unique and common values appear, or, to speak less in extremes, values of lesser and greater frequency. Here an intellectual hazard may be predicted: an inclination to favor the commoner values as more nearly universal and therefore more "normal" or otherwise superior. This procedure may be anticipated because of the security sense promoted by refuge into absolutes or even majorities. Some attempts to escape from relativism are therefore expectable. The hazard lies in a premature plumping upon the commoner and nearer values and the forcing of these into false absolutes—a process of intellectual short-circuiting. The longer the quest for new absolute values can be postponed and the longer the analytic comparison of relative values can be prosecuted, the closer shall we come to reemerging with at least near-absolutes. There will be talk in those days, as we are beginning to hear it already, that the principle of relativism is breaking down, that its own negativism is defeating it. There have been, admittedly, extravagances and unsound vulgarizations about cultural relativity. Actually, objective relativistic differences between cultures are not breaking down but being fortified. And relativism is not a negative principle except to those who feel that the whole world has lost its values when comparison makes their own private values lose their false absoluteness. Relativism may seem to turn the world fluid; but so did the concepts of evolution and of relativity in physics seem to turn the world fluid when they were new. Like them, cultural and value relativism is a potent instrument of progress in deeper understanding—and not only of the world but of man in the world.

On the other hand, the inescapable fact of cultural relativism does not

justify the conclusion that cultures are in all respects utterly disparate monads and hence strictly noncomparable entities.<sup>3</sup> If this were literally true, a comparative science of culture would be *ex hypothesi*<sup>4</sup> impossible. It is, unfortunately the case that up to this point anthropology has not solved very satisfactorily the problem of describing cultures in such a way that objective comparison is possible. Most cultural monographs organize the data in terms of the categories of our own contemporary Western culture: economics, technology, social organization, and the like. Such an ordering, of course, tears many of the facts from their own actual context and loads the analysis. The implicit assumption is that our categories are "given" by nature—an assumption contradicted most emphatically by these very investigations of different cultures. A smaller number of studies have attempted to present the information consistently in terms of the category system and whole way of thought of the culture being described. This approach obviously excludes the immediate possibility of a complete set of common terms of reference for comparison. Such a system of comparable concepts and terms remains to be worked out and will probably be established only gradually.

In principle, however, there is a generalized framework that underlies the more apparent and striking facts of cultural relativity. All cultures constitute so many somewhat distinct answers to essentially the same questions posed by human biology and by the generalities of the human situation. . . . Every society's patterns for living must provide approved and sanctioned ways for dealing with such universal circumstances as the existence of two sexes; the helplessness of infants; the need for satisfaction of the elementary biological requirements such as food, warmth, and sex; the presence of individuals of different ages and of differing physical and other capacities. The basic similarities in human biology the world over are vastly more massive

<sup>3</sup> As a matter of fact, cultures may share a large body of their content through historical connection and provable derivation and yet have arrived at pretty diverse value systems. If we could recover enough ancient and lost evidence, it is expectable that we would be driven to the admission that every culture shares some of its content, through derivation, with every other on earth. This historic interconnection leaves any monadal view or talk of the noncomparability of cultures without basis. Possessing coancestry, they must be comparable. All that the most confirmed relativists can properly claim is that to achieve the fullest understanding of any culture, we should not begin by applying to it the patterns and values of another culture. This eminently modest and reasonable principle of autonomy of comprehension, or reciprocity in understanding, does not assert that all the structure and all the values of any two cultures are utterly disparate—which would make them noncomparable and would be a manifestly extreme and improbable view. It affirms that there is comparability but that the structure-value system of one culture must not be imposed on another if sound understanding is the aim. Biologists have long taken this for granted about classes of organisms and yet have never stopped comparing them fruitfully. Only, their comparison means discovering likenesses and differences, not looking merely for likenesses or merely for differences.

<sup>4</sup> [That is, by definition.]

than the variations. Equally, there are certain necessities in social life for this kind of animal regardless of where that life is carried on or in what culture. Cooperation to obtain subsistence and for other ends requires a certain minimum of reciprocal behavior, of a standard system of communication, and indeed of mutually accepted values. The facts of human biology and of human group living supply, therefore, certain invariant points of reference from which cross-cultural comparison can start without begging questions that are themselves at issue. As Wissler pointed out, the broad outlines of the ground plan of all cultures is and has to be about the same because men always and everywhere are faced with certain unavoidable problems which arise out of the situation "given" by nature. Since most of the patterns of all cultures crystallize around the same foci, there are significant respects in which each culture is not wholly isolated, self-contained, disparate but rather related to and comparable with all other cultures.

Nor is the similarity between cultures, which in some ways transcends the fact of relativity, limited to the sheer forms of the universal culture pattern. There are at least some broad resemblances in content and specifically in value content. Considering the exuberant variation of cultures in most respects, the circumstance that in some particulars almost identical values prevail throughout mankind is most arresting. No culture tolerates indiscriminate lying, stealing, or violence within the in-group. The essential universality of the incest taboo is well-known. No culture places a value upon suffering as an end in itself; as a means to the ends of the society (punishment, discipline, etc.), yes; as a means to the ends of the individual (purification, mystical exaltation, etc.), yes; but of and for itself, never. We know of no culture in either space or time, including the Soviet Russian, where the official ideology denies an after-life, where the fact of death is not ceremonialized. Yet the more superficial conception of cultural relativity would suggest that at least one culture would have adopted the simple expedient of disposing of corpses in the same way most cultures do dispose of dead animals—i.e., just throwing the body out far enough from habitations so that the odor is not troubling. When one first looks rather carefully at the astonishing variety of cultural detail over the world one is tempted to conclude: human individuals have tried almost everything that is physically possible and nearly every individual habit has somewhere at some time been institutionalized in at least one culture. To a considerable degree this is a valid generalization—but not completely. In spite of loose talk (based upon an uncritical acceptance of an immature theory of cultural relativity) to the effect that the symptoms of mental disorder are completely relative

to culture, the fact of the matter is that all cultures define as abnormal individuals who are permanently inaccessible to communication or who fail to maintain some degree of control over their impulse life. Social life is impossible without communication, without some measure of order: the behavior of any "normal" individual must be predictable—within a certain range—by his fellows and interpretable by them.

To look freshly at values of the order just discussed is very difficult because they are commonplaces. And yet it is precisely because they are *commonplaces* that they are interesting and important. Their vast theoretical significance rests in the fact that despite all the influences that predispose toward cultural variation (biological variation, difference in physical environments, and the processes of history) all of the very many different cultures known to us have converged upon these universals. It is perfectly true (and for certain types of enquiry important) that the value "thou shalt not kill thy fellow tribesman" is not concretely identical either in its cognitive or in its affective aspects for a Navaho, an Ashanti, and a Chukchee. Nevertheless the central conception is the same, and there is understanding between representatives of different cultures as to the general intent of the prohibition. A Navaho would be profoundly shocked if he were to discover that there were no sanctions against in-group murder among the Ashanti.

There is nothing supernatural or even mysterious about the existences of these universalities in culture content. Human life is—and has to be—a moral life (up to a point) because it is a social life. It may safely be presumed that human groups which failed to incorporate certain values into their nascent cultures or which abrogated these values from their older tradition dissolved as societies or perished without record. Similarly, the biological sameness of the human animal (needs and potentialities) has also contributed to convergences.

The fact that a value is a universal does not, of course, make it an absolute. It is possible that changed circumstances in the human situation may lead to the gradual disappearance of some of the present universals. However, the mere existence of universals after so many millennia of culture history and in such diverse environments suggests that they correspond to something extremely deep in man's nature and/or are necessary conditions to social life.

When one moves from the universals or virtual universals to values which merely are quite widespread, one would be on most shaky ground to infer "rightness" or "wrongness," "better" or "worse" from relative incidence. A value may have a very wide distribution in the world at a particular time



just because of historical accidents such as the political and economic power of one nation at that time. Nations diffuse their culture into the areas their power reaches. Nevertheless this does not mean one must take all cultural values except universals as of necessarily equal validity. Slavery or cannibalism may have a place in certain cultures that is not evident to the ethnocentric Christian. Yet even if these culture patterns play an important part in the smooth functioning of these societies, they are still subject to a judgment which is alike moral and scientific. This judgment is not just a projection of values, local in time and space, that are associated with Western culture. Rather, it rests upon a *consensus gentium* and the best scientific evidence as to the nature of raw human nature—i.e., that human nature which all cultures mold and channel but never entirely remake. To say that certain aspects of Naziism were morally wrong—is not parochial arrogance. It is—or can be—an assertion based both upon cross-cultural evidence as to the universalities in human needs, potentialities, and fulfillments and upon natural science knowledge with which the basic assumptions of any philosophy must be congruent.

Any science must be adequate to explain both the similarities and the differences in the phenomena with which it deals. Recent anthropology has focussed its attention preponderantly upon the differences. They are there; they are very real and very important. Cultural relativism has been completely established and there must be no attempt to explain it away or to deprecate its importance because it is inconvenient, hard to take, hard to live with. Some values are almost purely cultural and draw their significance only from the matrix of that culture. Even the universal values have their special phrasings and emphases in accord with each distinct culture. And when a culture pattern, such as slavery, is derogated on the ground that it transgresses one of the more universal norms which in some sense and to some degree transcend cultural differences, one must still examine it not within a putatively absolutistic frame but in the light of cultural relativism.

At the same time one must never forget that cultural differences, real and important though they are, are still so many variations on themes supplied by raw human nature and by the limits and conditions of social life. In some ways culturally altered human nature is a comparatively superficial veneer. The common understandings between men of different culture are very broad, very general, very easily obscured by language and many other observable symbols. True universals or near universals are apparently few in number. But they seem to be as deep-going as they are rare. Relativity exists

only within a universal framework. Anthropology's facts attest that the phrase "a common humanity" is in no sense meaningless. This is also important.

Rapoport has recently argued that objective relativism can lead to the development of truly explicit and truly universal standards in science and in values:

So it is incorrect to say that the scientific outlook is simply a by-product of a particular culture. It is rather the essence of a culture which has not yet been established—a *culture-studying* culture. Ironically, the anthropologists, who often are most emphatic in stating that no noncultural standards of evaluation exist, are among the most active builders of this new culture-studying culture, whose standards transcend those of the cultures which anthropologists study and thus give them an opportunity to emancipate themselves from the limitations of the local standards. The anthropologist can remain the anthropologist both in New Guinea and in Middletown, in spite of the fact that he may have been born in Middletown, or in New Guinea.

The moral attitudes contained in the scientific outlook have a different genesis from those contained in ordinary "unconscious" cultures. They are a result of a "freer choice," because they involve a deeper insight into the consequences of the choice.

In sum, cultures are distinct yet similar and comparable. As Steward has pointed out, the features that lend uniqueness are the secondary or variable ones. Two or more cultures can have a great deal of content—and even of patterning—in common and still there is distinctness; there are universals, but relativistic autonomy remains a valid principle. Both perspectives are true and important, and no false either-or antinomy must be posed between them. Once again there is a proper analogy between cultures and personalities. Each human being is unique in his concrete totality, and yet he resembles all other human beings in certain respects and some particular human beings a great deal. It is no more correct to limit each culture to its distinctive features and organization, abstracting out as "pre-cultural" or as "conditions of culture" the likenesses that are universal, than to deny to each personality those aspects that derive from its cultural heritage and from participation in common humanity.



# SELF, PERSON, AND SOCIETY

## I. THE SELF





## SIGMUND FREUD

PERHAPS the most influential and provocative of the many modern attempts to comprehend psychological phenomena within the terms of a limited number of purely naturalistic concepts was that developed by Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. There are few areas of contemporary intellectual life, whether in the sciences of society, psychology, and medicine, or in the humanistic domains of literature and art, which have remained unresponsive to the impact of Freud's original and highly creative thought. This is not simply the result of an interest in the clinical applications of his work. Rather it rests upon an awareness that Freud's basic formulations touch directly upon the fundamental issues of human experience.

Throughout his career, Freud was dedicated to the scientific investigation of the psychical life of man. He was first a physician and while still in his twenties contributed valuable studies of neurology and brain physiology. But the problems he encountered as a private practitioner, together with a restless curiosity to search into the nature of mental ailments, early led him to his lifetime preoccupation with psychiatry. Freud did not regard himself as the pioneer in this comparatively unexplored branch of medical science. Considerable work was already in progress in France under the direction of eminent psychologists when he left his native Vienna to study in the leading clinics of psychological therapy at Paris and Nancy. What impressed him most was the scientific revolution then in progress at these centers. "The 'demon' of priestly imagination" was being replaced "by a psychological formula," and Freud was eager to explore further the implications of this fact.

The main concern of this vanguard of French investigators, and that of Freud and his Austrian colleague Josef Breuer, was with the use of hypnotism, suggestion, and electrotherapy in the relief and treatment of hysteria and other functional nervous disorders. But Freud soon realized, from clinical experience, the inadequacy of these techniques to cure, and grew restless with what he felt to be the weak theoretical structure upon which they rested. In 1895 Freud and Breuer published their joint *Studies in Hysteria*, which was the result of much therapeutic work with hysterics who, for no discernible somatic reasons, suffered from a variety of acute physical disabilities. Freud, dissatisfied with accepted explanations and methods of approach, was eager to explore the theoretical possibilities implicit in these curious facts. But Breuer, for a number of reasons, refused to go further into the uncharted regions of the psyche. Therefore Freud continued alone with the development of his new science of the human self. Before the turn of the century he was already elaborating the "free association" method of psychoanalytic treatment and widening the basis of general psychiatric technique.

During this formative phase of his work, Freud postulated the generic assumption of his entire system. In order to account for the symptoms—such as paralysis or loss of speech—which he observed in certain types of patients, he advanced the

idea that such symptoms were substitute acts taking the place of other aborted "acts," desire to perform which had been unconsciously "repressed." Freud regarded this concept of "repression" as "the foundation-stone on which the whole structure of psychoanalysis rests." It meant that, in order to seek out the genesis of psychological disorder, the entire complex life-career of the human sufferer must be systematically searched for the nature and causes of "frustrated" desire. In turn, to explain this fact of continuity and history of the hidden experiences of the self, further hypotheses were required, for, in Freud's view, the life of the unconscious contained all the elusive mechanisms of human motivation. How were these sub-rational springs of action related to the waking life? What accounted for the inner tensions underlying the process of living itself? And why did so much human emotion, feeling, and desire never, as it were, see the light of day?

Obviously these questions evoked issues that went far beyond the clinical study of nervous disorders. For Freud, intelligible, systematic answers to these queries represented the groundwork of a new science of human nature. But true to his scientific temper of mind, Freud recognized that only through the subtle interplay of theory and practice could this science be developed. His appreciation of the fallible character of all discovery and the subsequent need for theoretical reconstruction is apparent in his technical papers as well as in his general lectures to lay audiences.

Each new phase of investigation raised further questions and revealed new areas for study. Freud found in dreams the key to many of the puzzlements of unconscious life—he himself declared that this was the "most valuable of all the discoveries it has been my good fortune to make"—and in nonvolitional manifestations of speech, in slips of the tongue, in lapses of memory, in wit, and in jests, many clues to the complex machinery of frustration and sublimation. With these materials, in the first decade of the twentieth century, Freud worked out in greater detail his view of the psychosexual maturation of the human individual from infancy to adult life. He saw that in the period of childhood "the seeds of later disease may be acquired," and also found in this development the emergence of discordant functions within the human personality. He became convinced that within this context were born the persistent conflicts both within man and between the self and its social environment. While his orientation was essentially deterministic, tending, from one point of view, to destroy the illusion that man wills the direction of his own life, from another point of view he always remained a physician dedicated to the alleviation of human misery and convinced that the deliberate use of rational inquiry, even into the irrational, held promise ultimately of raising to conscious consideration the torments of the psyche and hence of placing them within the possibility of control and cure.

The first of the following selections is from *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*. These lectures were originally delivered to an audience of medical students at the University of Vienna (1915-1917) and first published in English in 1920. The present translation, from the German of the revised edition, is by Joan Riviere. The second selection is from *An Outline of Psychoanalysis*, which originally appeared in English in the *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, Vol. XXI (1940), in a translation from the German by James Strachey.

*A GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHOANALYSIS**Part I*

## FIRST LECTURE: INTRODUCTION

I do not know what knowledge any of you may already have of psycho-analysis, either from reading or from hearsay. But having regard to the title of my lectures—Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis—I am bound to proceed as though you knew nothing of the subject and needed instruction, even in its first elements.

One thing, at least, I may pre-suppose that you know—namely, that psycho-analysis is a method of medical treatment for those suffering from nervous disorders; and I can give you at once an illustration of the way in which psycho-analytic procedure differs from, and often even reverses, what is customary in other branches of medicine. Usually, when we introduce a patient to a new form of treatment we minimize its difficulties and give him confident assurances of its success. This is, in my opinion, perfectly justifiable, for we thereby increase the probability of success. But when we undertake to treat a neurotic psycho-analytically we proceed otherwise. We explain to him the difficulties of the method, its long duration, the trials and sacrifices which will be required of him; and, as to the result, we tell him that we can make no definite promises, that success depends upon his endeavours, upon his understanding, his adaptability and his perseverance. We have, of course, good reasons, into which you will perhaps gain some insight later on, for adopting this apparently perverse attitude.

Now forgive me if I begin by treating you in the same way as I do my neurotic patients, for I shall positively advise you against coming to hear me a second time. And with this intention I shall explain to you how of necessity you can obtain from me only an incomplete knowledge of psycho-analysis and also what difficulties stand in the way of your forming an independent judgement on the subject. For I shall show you how the whole trend of your training and your accustomed modes of thought must inevitably have made you hostile to psycho-analysis, and also how much you would have to overcome in your own minds in order to master this instinctive opposition. I naturally cannot foretell what degree of understanding of psycho-analysis you may gain from my lectures, but I can at least assure you that by attend-

---

This selection has been reprinted from Sigmund Freud, *A General Introduction to Psycho-analysis* by permission of Liveright, Publishers, Copyright 1935 Edward L. Bernays; Copyright R 1948 Susie Hock (1949 ed., pp. 17-24, 252, 341-356).



ing them you will not have learnt how to conduct a psycho-analytic investigation, nor how to carry out a psycho-analytic treatment. And further, if any one of you should feel dissatisfied with a merely cursory acquaintance with psycho-analysis and should wish to form a permanent connection with it, I shall not merely discourage him, but I shall actually warn him against it. For as things are at the present time, not only would the choice of such a career put an end to all chances of academic success, but, upon taking up work as a practitioner, such a man would find himself in a community which misunderstood his aims and intentions, regarded him with suspicion and hostility, and let loose upon him all the latent evil impulses harboured within it. Perhaps you can infer from the accompaniments of the war now raging in Europe what a countless host that is to reckon with.

However, there are always some people to whom the possibility of a new addition to knowledge will prove an attraction strong enough to survive all such inconveniences. If there are any such among you who will appear at my second lecture in spite of my words of warning they will be welcome. But all of you have a right to know what these inherent difficulties of psycho-analysis are to which I have alluded.

First of all, there is the problem of the teaching and exposition of the subject. In your medical studies you have been accustomed to use your eyes. You see the anatomical specimen, the precipitate of the chemical reaction, the contraction of the muscle as the result of the stimulation of its nerves. Later you come into contact with the patients; you learn the symptoms of disease by the evidence of your senses; the results of pathological processes can be demonstrated to you, and in many cases even the exciting cause of them in an isolated form. On the surgical side you are witnesses of the measures by which the patient is helped, and are permitted to attempt them yourselves. Even in psychiatry, demonstration of patients, of their altered expression, speech and behaviour, yields a series of observations which leave a deep impression on your minds. Thus a teacher of medicine acts for the most part as an exponent and guide, leading you as it were through a museum, while you gain in this way a direct relationship to what is displayed to you and believe yourselves to have been convinced by your own experience of the existence of the new facts.

But in psycho-analysis, unfortunately, all this is different. In psycho-analytic treatment nothing happens but an exchange of words between the patient and the physician. The patient talks, tells of his past experiences and present impressions, complains, and expresses his wishes and his emotions. The physician listens, attempts to direct the patient's thought-processes, reminds

him, forces his attention in certain directions, gives him explanations and observes the reactions of understanding or denial thus evoked. The patient's unenlightened relatives—people of a kind to be impressed only by something visible and tangible, preferably by the sort of "action" that may be seen at a cinema—never omit to express their doubts of how "mere talk can possibly cure anybody." Their reasoning is of course as illogical as it is inconsistent. For they are the same people who are always convinced that the sufferings of neurotics are purely "in their own imagination." Words and magic were in the beginning one and the same thing, and even to-day words retain much of their magical power. By words one of us can give to another the greatest happiness or bring about utter despair; by words the teacher imparts his knowledge to the student; by words the orator sweeps his audience with him and determines its judgements and decisions. Words call forth emotions and are universally the means by which we influence our fellow-creatures. Therefore let us not despise the use of words in psycho-therapy and let us be content if we may overhear the words which pass between the analyst and the patient.

But even that is impossible. The dialogue which constitutes the analysis will admit of no audience; the process cannot be demonstrated. One could, of course, exhibit a neurasthenic or hysterical patient to students at a psychiatric lecture. He would relate his case and his symptoms, but nothing more. He will make the communications necessary to the analysis only under the conditions of a special affective relationship to the physician; in the presence of a single person to whom he was indifferent he would become mute. For these communications relate to all his most private thoughts and feelings, all that which as a socially independent person he must hide from others, all that which, being foreign to his own conception of himself, he tries to conceal even from himself.

It is impossible, therefore, for you to be actually present during a psycho-analytic treatment; you can only be told about it, and can learn psycho-analysis, in the strictest sense of the word, only by hearsay. This tuition at second hand, so to say, puts you in a very unusual and difficult position as regards forming your own judgement on the subject, which will therefore largely depend on the reliance you can place on your informant.

Now imagine for a moment that you were present at a lecture in history instead of in psychiatry, and that the lecturer was dealing with the life and conquests of Alexander the Great. What reason would you have to believe what he told you? The situation would appear at first sight even more unsatisfactory than in the case of psycho-analysis, for the professor of history

had no more part in Alexander's campaigns than you yourselves; the psycho-analyst at least informs you of matters in which he himself has played a part. But then we come to the question of what evidence there is to support the historian. He can refer you to the accounts of early writers who were either contemporaries or who lived not long after the events in question, such as Diodorus, Plutarch, Arrian, and others; he can lay before you reproductions of the preserved coins and statues of the king, and pass round a photograph of the mosaic at Pompeii representing the battle at Issus. Yet, strictly speaking, all these documents only prove that the existence of Alexander and the reality of his deeds were already believed in by former generations of men, and your criticism might begin anew at this point. And then you would find that not everything reported of Alexander is worthy of belief or sufficiently authenticated in detail, but I can hardly suppose that you would leave the lecture-room in doubt altogether as to the reality of Alexander the Great. Your conclusions would be principally determined by two considerations: first, that the lecturer could have no conceivable motive for attempting to persuade you of something which he did not himself believe to be true, and secondly, that all the available authorities agree more or less in their accounts of the facts. In questioning the accuracy of the early writers you would apply these tests again, the possible motives of the authors and the agreement to be found between them. The result of such tests would certainly be convincing in the case of Alexander, probably less so in regard to figures like Moses and Nimrod. Later on you will perceive clearly enough what doubts can be raised against the credibility of an exponent of psycho-analysis.

Now you will have a right to ask the question: If no objective evidence for psycho-analysis exists and no possibility of demonstrating the process, how is it possible to study it at all or to convince oneself of its truth? The study of it is indeed not an easy matter, nor are there many people who have thoroughly learned it; still, there is, of course, some way of learning it. Psycho-analysis is learnt first of all on oneself, through the study of one's own personality. This is not exactly what is meant by introspection, but it may be so described for want of a better word. There is a whole series of very common and well-known mental phenomena which can be taken as material for self-analysis when one has acquired some knowledge of the method. In this way one may obtain the required conviction of the reality of the processes which psycho-analysis describes, and of the truth of its conceptions, although progress on these lines is not without its limitations. One gets much further by submitting oneself to analysis by a skilled analyst, undergoing the working of the analysis in one's own person and using the oppor-

tunity to observe the finer details of the technique which the analyst employs. This, eminently the best way, is of course only practicable for individuals and cannot be used in a class of students.

The second difficulty you will find in connection with psycho-analysis is not, on the other hand, inherent in it, but is one for which I must hold you yourselves responsible, at least in so far as your medical studies have influenced you. Your training will have induced in you an attitude of mind very far removed from the psycho-analytical one. You have been trained to establish the functions and disturbances of the organism on an anatomical basis, to explain them in terms of chemistry and physics, and to regard them from a biological point of view; but no part of your interest has ever been directed to the mental aspects of life, in which, after all, the development of the marvellously complicated organism culminates. For this reason a psychological attitude of mind is still foreign to you, and you are accustomed to regard it with suspicion, to deny it a scientific status, and to leave it to the general public, poets, mystics, and philosophers. Now this limitation in you is undoubtedly detrimental to your medical efficiency; for on meeting a patient it is the mental aspects with which one first comes into contact, as in most human relationships, and I am afraid you will pay the penalty of having to yield a part of the curative influence at which you aim to the quacks, mystics, and faith-healers whom you despise.

I quite acknowledge that there is an excuse for this defect in your previous training. There is no auxiliary philosophical science that might be of service to you in your profession. Neither speculative philosophy nor descriptive psychology, nor even the so-called experimental psychology which is studied in connection with the physiology of the sense-organs, as they are taught in the schools, can tell you anything useful of the relations existing between mind and body, or can give you a key to comprehension of a possible disorder of the mental functions. It is true that the psychiatric branch of medicine occupies itself with describing the different forms of recognizable mental disturbances and grouping them in clinical pictures, but in their best moments psychiatrists themselves are doubtful whether their purely descriptive formulations deserve to be called science. The origin, mechanism, and interrelation of the symptoms which make up these clinical pictures are undiscovered: either they cannot be correlated with any demonstrable changes in the brain, or only with such changes as in no way explain them. These mental disturbances are open to therapeutic influence only when they can be identified as secondary effects of some organic disease.

This is the lacuna which psycho-analysis is striving to fill. It hopes to pro-



vide psychiatry with the missing psychological foundation, to discover the common ground on which a correlation of bodily and mental disorder becomes comprehensible. To this end it must dissociate itself from every foreign preconception, whether anatomical, chemical, or physiological, and must work throughout with conceptions of a purely psychological order, and for this very reason I fear that it will appear strange to you at first.

For the next difficulty I shall not hold you, your training or your mental attitude, responsible. There are two tenets of psycho-analysis which offend the whole world and excite its resentment; the one conflicts with intellectual, the other with moral and aesthetic prejudices. Let us not underestimate these prejudices; they are powerful things, residues of valuable, even necessary, stages in human evolution. They are maintained by emotional forces, and the fight against them is a hard one.

The first of these displeasing propositions of psycho-analysis is this: that mental processes are essentially unconscious, and that those which are conscious are merely isolated acts and parts of the whole psychic entity. Now I must ask you to remember that, on the contrary, we are accustomed to identify the mental with the conscious. Consciousness appears to us as positively the characteristic that defines mental life, and we regard psychology as the study of the content of consciousness. This even appears so evident that any contradiction of it seems obvious nonsense to us, and yet it is impossible for psycho-analysis to avoid this contradiction, or to accept the identity between the conscious and the psychic. The psycho-analytical definition of the mind is that it comprises processes of the nature of feeling, thinking, and wishing, and it maintains that there are such things as unconscious thinking and unconscious wishing. But in doing so psycho-analysis has forfeited at the outset the sympathy of the sober and scientifically minded, and incurred the suspicion of being a fantastic cult occupied with dark and unfathomable mysteries.<sup>1</sup> You yourselves must find it difficult to understand why I should stigmatize an abstract proposition, such as "The psychic is the conscious," as a prejudice; nor can you guess yet what evolutionary process could have led to the denial of the unconscious, if it does indeed exist, nor what advantage could have been achieved by this denial. It seems like an empty wrangle over words to argue whether mental life is to be regarded as co-extensive with consciousness or whether it may be said to stretch beyond this limit, and yet I can assure you that the acceptance of unconscious mental processes represents a decisive step towards a new orientation in the world and in science.

<sup>1</sup> Literally: "that wishes to build in the dark and fish in murky waters."—Trans.

As little can you suspect how close is the connection between this first bold step on the part of psycho-analysis and the second to which I am now coming. For this next proposition, which we put forward as one of the discoveries of psycho-analysis, consists in the assertion that impulses, which can only be described as sexual in both the narrower and the wider sense, play a peculiarly large part, never before sufficiently appreciated, in the causation of nervous and mental disorders. Nay, more, that these sexual impulses have contributed invaluablely to the highest cultural, artistic, and social achievements of the human mind.

In my opinion, it is the aversion from this conclusion of psycho-analytic investigation that is the most significant source of the opposition it has encountered. Are you curious to know how we ourselves account for this? We believe that civilization has been built up, under the pressure of the struggle for existence, by sacrifices in gratification of the primitive impulses, and that it is to a great extent for ever being re-created, as each individual, successively joining the community, repeats the sacrifice of his instinctive pleasures for the common good. The sexual are amongst the most important of the instinctive forces thus utilized: they are in this way sublimated, that is to say, their energy is turned aside from its sexual goal and diverted towards other ends, no longer sexual and socially more valuable. But the structure thus built up is insecure, for the sexual impulses are with difficulty controlled; in each individual who takes up his part in the work of civilization there is a danger that a rebellion of the sexual impulses may occur, against this diversion of their energy. Society can conceive of no more powerful menace to its culture than would arise from the liberation of the sexual impulses and a return of them to their original goal. Therefore society dislikes this sensitive place in its development being touched upon; that the power of the sexual instinct should be recognized, and the significance of the individual's sexual life revealed, is very far from its interests; with a view to discipline it has rather taken the course of diverting attention away from this whole field. For this reason, the revelations of psycho-analysis are not tolerated by it, and it would greatly prefer to brand them as aesthetically offensive, morally reprehensible, or dangerous. But since such objections are not valid arguments against conclusions which claim to represent the objective results of scientific investigation, the opposition must be translated into intellectual terms before it can be expressed. It is a characteristic of human nature to be inclined to regard anything which is disagreeable as untrue, and then without much difficulty to find arguments against it. So society pronounces the unacceptable to be untrue, disputes the results of psycho-analysis with logical and concrete

arguments, arising, however, in affective sources, and clings to them with all the strength of prejudice against every attempt at refutation. . . .

### *Part III*

#### EIGHTEENTH LECTURE: FIXATION UPON TRAUMAS: THE UNCONSCIOUS

. . . [By] emphasizing the unconscious in mental life we have called forth all the malevolence in humanity in opposition to psycho-analysis. Do not be astonished at this and do not suppose that this opposition relates to the obvious difficulty of conceiving the unconscious or to the relative inaccessibility of the evidence which supports its existence. I believe it has a deeper source. Humanity has in the course of time had to endure from the hands of science two great outrages upon its naïve self-love. The first was when it realized that our earth was not the centre of the universe, but only a tiny speck in a world-system of a magnitude hardly conceivable; this is associated in our minds with the name of Copernicus, although Alexandrian doctrines taught something very similar. The second was when biological research robbed man of his peculiar privilege of having been specially created, and relegated him to a descent from the animal world, implying an ineradicable animal nature in him: this transvaluation has been accomplished in our own time upon the instigation of Charles Darwin, Wallace, and their predecessors, and not without the most violent opposition from their contemporaries. But man's craving for grandiosity is now suffering the third and most bitter blow from present-day psychological research which is endeavouring to prove to the "ego" of each one of us that he is not even master in his own house, but that he must remain content with the veriest scraps of information about what is going on unconsciously in his own mind. We psycho-analysts were neither the first nor the only ones to propose to mankind that they should look inward; but it appears to be our lot to advocate it most insistently and to support it by empirical evidence which touches every man closely. This is the kernel of the universal revolt against our science, of the total disregard of academic courtesy in dispute, and the liberation of opposition from all the constraints of impartial logic. . . .

#### TWENTY-FIFTH LECTURE: ANXIETY

*Anxiety* (or *dread*)<sup>2</sup> itself needs no description; everyone has personally experienced this sensation, or to speak more correctly this affective condition,

<sup>2</sup> *Angst*. The German word denotes a more intense feeling than the English 'anxiety'; the latter, however, derived from the same root, has become established as the technical English term.--Trans.

at some time or other. But in my opinion not enough serious consideration has been given to the question why nervous persons in particular suffer from anxiety so much more intensely, and so much more altogether, than others. Perhaps it has been taken for granted that they should; indeed, the words "nervous" and "anxious" are used interchangeably, as if they meant the same thing. This is not justifiable, however; there are anxious people who are otherwise not in any way nervous and there are, besides, neurotics with numerous symptoms who exhibit no tendency to dread.

However this may be, one thing is certain, that the problem of anxiety is a nodal point, linking up all kinds of most important questions; a riddle, of which the solution must cast a flood of light upon our whole mental life. I do not claim that I can give you a complete solution; but you will certainly expect psycho-analysis to have attacked this problem too in a different manner from that adopted by academic medicine. Interest there centres upon the anatomical processes by which the anxiety condition comes about. We learn that the medulla oblongata is stimulated, and the patient is told that he is suffering from a neurosis in the vagal nerve. The medulla oblongata is a wondrous and beauteous object; I well remember how much time and labour I devoted to the study of it years ago. But to-day I must say I know of nothing less important for the psychological comprehension of anxiety than a knowledge of the nerve-paths by which the excitations travel.

One may consider anxiety for a long time without giving a thought to nervousness. You will understand me at once when I describe this form of anxiety as OBJECTIVE ANXIETY, in contrast to neurotic anxiety. Now *real* anxiety or dread appears to us a very natural and rational thing; we should call it a reaction to the perception of an external danger, of an injury which is expected and foreseen; it is bound up with the reflex of flight, and may be regarded as an expression of the instinct of self-preservation. The occasions of it, i.e. the objects and situations about which anxiety is felt, will obviously depend to a great extent upon the state of the person's knowledge and feeling of power regarding the outer world. It seems to us quite natural that a savage should be afraid of a cannon or of an eclipse of the sun, while a white man who can handle the weapon and foretell the phenomenon remains unafraid in the same situation. At other times it is knowledge itself which inspires fear, because it reveals the danger sooner; thus a savage will recoil with terror at the sight of a track in the jungle which conveys nothing to an ignorant white man, but means that some wild beast is near at hand; and an experienced sailor will perceive with dread a little cloud on the horizon



because it means an approaching hurricane, while to a passenger it looks quite insignificant.

The view that objective anxiety is rational and expedient, however, will on deeper consideration be admitted to need thorough revision. In face of imminent danger the only expedient behaviour, actually, would be first a cool appraisal of the forces at disposal as compared with the magnitude of the danger at hand, and then a decision whether flight or defence, or possibly attack, offered the best prospect of a successful outcome. Dread, however, has no place in this scheme; everything to be done will be accomplished as well and probably better if dread does not develop. You will see too that when dread is excessive it becomes in the highest degree inexpedient; it paralyses every action, even that of flight. The reaction to danger usually consists in a combination of the two things, the fear-affect and the defensive action; the frightened animal is afraid *and* flees, but the expedient element in this is the "flight," not the "being afraid."

One is tempted therefore to assert that the development of anxiety is never expedient; perhaps a closer dissection of the situation in dread will give us a better insight into it. The first thing about it is the "readiness" for danger, which expresses itself in heightened sensorial perception and in motor tension. This expectant readiness is obviously advantageous; indeed, absence of it may be responsible for grave results. It is then followed on the one hand by a motor action, taking the form primarily of flight and, on a higher level, of defensive action; and on the other hand by the condition we call a sensation of "anxiety" or dread. The more the development of dread is limited to a flash, to a mere signal, the less does it hinder the transition from the state of anxious readiness to that of action, and the more expediently does the whole course of events proceed. The *anxious readiness* therefore seems to me the expedient element, and the *development* of anxiety the inexpedient element, in what we call anxiety or dread.

I shall not enter upon a discussion whether the words anxiety, fear, fright, mean the same or different things in common usage. In my opinion, *anxiety* relates to the condition and ignores the object, whereas in the word *fear* attention is directed to the object; *fright* does actually seem to possess a special meaning—namely, it relates specifically to the condition induced when danger is unexpectedly encountered without previous anxious readiness. It might be said then that anxiety is a protection against fright.

It will not have escaped you that a certain ambiguity and indefiniteness exists in the use of the word "anxiety." It is generally understood to mean the subjective condition arising upon the perception of what we have called

“developed” anxiety; such a condition is called an affect. Now what is an affect, in a dynamic sense? It is certainly something very complex. An affect comprises first of all certain motor innervations or discharges; and, secondly, certain sensations, which moreover are of two kinds—namely, the perceptions of the motor actions which have been performed, and the directly pleasurable or painful sensations which give the affect what we call its dominant note. But I do not think that this description penetrates to the essence of an affect. With certain affects one seems to be able to see deeper, and to recognize that the core of it, binding the whole complex structure together, is of the nature of a *repetition* of some particular very significant previous experience. This experience could only have been an exceedingly early impression of a universal type, to be found in the previous history of the species rather than of the individual. In order to be better understood I might say that an affective state is constructed like an hysterical attack, i.e. is the precipitate of a reminiscence. An hysterical attack is therefore comparable to a newly formed individual affect, and the normal affect to a universal hysteria which has become a heritage.

Do not imagine that what I am telling you now about affects is the common property of normal psychology. On the contrary, these conceptions have grown on the soil of psycho-analysis and are only indigenous there. What psychology has to say about affects—the James-Lange theory, for instance—is utterly incomprehensible to us psycho-analysts and impossible for us to discuss. We do not however regard what we know of affects as at all final; it is a first attempt to take our bearings in this obscure region. To continue, then: we believe we know what this early impression is which is reproduced as a repetition in the anxiety affect. We think it is the experience of *birth*—an experience which involves just such a concatenation of painful feelings, of discharges of excitation, and of bodily sensations, as to have become a prototype for all occasions on which life is endangered, ever after to be reproduced again in us as the dread or “anxiety” condition. The enormous increase in stimulation effected by the interruption of the renewal of blood (the internal respiration) was the cause of the anxiety experience at birth—the first anxiety was therefore toxically induced. The name *Angst* (anxiety)—*angustia*, *Enge*, a narrow place, a strait—accentuates the characteristic tightening in the breathing which was then the consequence of a real situation and is subsequently repeated almost invariably with an affect. It is very suggestive too that the first anxiety state arose on the occasion of the separation from the mother. We naturally believe that the disposition to reproduce the first anxiety condition has become so deeply ingrained in the organism, through

countless generations, that no single individual can escape the anxiety affect; even though, like the legendary Macduff, he "was from his mother's womb untimely ripped" and so did not himself experience the act of birth. What the prototype of the anxiety condition may be for other animals than mammals we cannot say; neither do we know what the complex of sensations in them is which is equivalent to fear in us.

It may perhaps interest you to know how it was possible to arrive at such an idea as this—that birth is the source and prototype of the anxiety affect. Speculation had least of all to do with it; on the contrary, I borrowed a thought from the naïve intuitive mind of the people. Many years ago a number of young house-physicians, including myself, were sitting round a dinner-table, and one of the assistants at the obstetrical clinic was telling us all the funny stories of the last midwives' examination. One of the candidates was asked what it meant when the meconium (child's excreta) was present in the waters at birth, and promptly replied: "That the child is frightened." She was ridiculed and failed. But I silently took her part and began to suspect that the poor unsophisticated woman's unerring perception had revealed a very important connection.

Now let us turn to neurotic anxiety; what are the special manifestations and conditions found in the anxiety of nervous persons? There is a great deal to be described here. First of all, we find a general apprehensiveness in them, a "free-floating" anxiety, as we call it, ready to attach itself to any thought which is at all appropriate affecting judgements, inducing expectations, lying in wait for any opportunity to find a justification for itself. We call this condition "*expectant dread*" or "anxious expectation." People who are tormented with this kind of anxiety always anticipate the worst of all possible outcomes, interpret every chance happening as an evil omen, and exploit every uncertainty to mean the worst. The tendency to this kind of expectation of evil is found as a character-trait in many people who cannot be described as ill in any other way, and we call them "over-anxious" or pessimistic; but a marked degree of expectant dread is an invariable accompaniment of the nervous disorder which I have called anxiety-neurosis and include among the actual neuroses.

In contrast to this type of anxiety, a second form of it is found to be much more circumscribed in the mind, and attached to definite objects and situations. This is the anxiety of the extraordinarily various and often very peculiar phobias. Stanley Hall, the distinguished American psychologist, has recently taken the trouble to designate a whole series of these phobias by gorgeous Greek titles; they sound like the ten plagues of Egypt, except that

there are far more than ten of them. Just listen to the things that can become the object or content of a phobia: darkness, open air, open spaces, cats, spiders, caterpillars, snakes, mice, thunder, sharp points, blood, enclosed places, crowds, loneliness, crossing bridges, travelling by land or sea, and so on. As a first attempt to take one's bearings in this chaos we may divide them into three groups. Many of the objects and situations feared are rather sinister, even to us normal people, they have some connection with danger; and these phobias are not entirely incomprehensible to us, although their intensity seems very much exaggerated. Most of us, for instance, have a feeling of repulsion upon encountering a snake. It may be said that the snake-phobia is universal in mankind. Charles Darwin has described most vividly how he could not control his dread of a snake that darted at him, although he knew that he was protected from it by a thick plate of glass. The second group consists of situations that still have some relation to danger, but to one that is usually belittled or not emphasized by us; most situation-phobias belong to this group. We know that there is more chance of meeting with a disaster in a railway train than at home—namely, a collision; we also know that a ship may sink, whereupon it is usual to be drowned; but we do not brood upon these dangers and we travel without anxiety by train and boat. Nor can it be denied that if a bridge were to break at the moment we were crossing it we should be hurled into the torrent, but that only happens so very occasionally that it is not a danger worth considering. Solitude too has its dangers, which in certain circumstances we avoid, but there is no question of never being able to endure it for a moment under any conditions. The same thing applies to crowds, enclosed spaces, thunderstorms, and so on. What is foreign to us in these phobias is not so much their content as their intensity. The anxiety accompanying a phobia is positively indescribable! And we sometimes get the impression that neurotics are not really at all fearful of those things which can, under certain conditions, arouse anxiety in us and which they call by the same names.

There remains a third group which is entirely unintelligible to us. When a strong full-grown man is afraid to cross a street or square in his own so familiar town, or when a healthy well-developed woman becomes almost senseless with fear because a cat has brushed against her dress or a mouse has scurried through the room, how can we see the connection with danger which is obviously present to these people? With this kind of animal-phobia it is no question of an increased intensity of common human antipathies; to prove the contrary, there are numbers of people who, for instance, cannot pass a cat without attracting and petting it. A mouse is a thing that so many



women are afraid of, and yet it is at the same time a very favourite pet name;<sup>3</sup> many a girl who is delighted to be called so by her lover will scream with terror at the sight of the dainty little creature itself. The behaviour of the man who is afraid to cross streets and squares only suggests one thing to us—that he behaves like a little child. A child is directly taught that such situations are dangerous, and the man's anxiety too is allayed when he is led by someone across the open space.

The two forms of anxiety described, the "free-floating" expectant dread and that attached to phobias, are independent of each other. The one is not the other at a further stage; they are only rarely combined, and then as if fortuitously. The most intense general apprehensiveness does not necessarily lead to a phobia; people who have been hampered all their lives by agoraphobia may be quite free from pessimistic expectant dread. Many phobias, e.g. fear of open spaces, of railway travelling, are demonstrably acquired first in later life; others, such as fear of darkness, thunder, animals, seem to have existed from the beginning. The former signify serious illness, the latter are more of the nature of idiosyncrasies, peculiarities; anyone exhibiting one of these latter may be suspected of harbouring others similar to it. I must add that we group all these phobias under *anxiety-hysteria*, that is, we regard them as closely allied to the well-known disorder called conversion-hysteria.

The third form taken by neurotic anxiety brings us to an enigma; there is no visible connection at all between the anxiety and the danger dreaded. This anxiety occurs in hysteria, for instance, accompanying the hysterical symptoms; or under various conditions of excitement in which, it is true, we should expect some affect to be displayed, but least of all an anxiety-affect; or without reference to any conditions, incomprehensible both to us and to the patient, an unrelated anxiety-attack. We may look far and wide without discovering a danger or an occasion which could even be exaggerated to account for it. These spontaneous attacks show therefore that the complex condition which we describe as anxiety can be split up into components. The whole attack can be represented (as a substitute) by a single intensively developed symptom—shuddering, faintness, palpitation of the heart, inability to breathe—and the general feeling which we recognize as anxiety may be absent or may have become unnoticeable. And yet these states which are termed "anxiety equivalents" have the same clinical and aetiological validity as anxiety itself.

Two questions arise now: Is it possible to bring neurotic anxiety, in which such a small part or none at all is played by danger, into relation with "ob-

<sup>3</sup> In Germany it replaces the use of "duck" for this purpose in English.—Trans.

jective anxiety," which is essentially a reaction to danger? And, how is neurotic anxiety to be understood? We will at present hold fast to the expectation that where there is anxiety there must be something of which one is afraid.

Clinical observation yields various clues to the comprehension of neurotic anxiety, and I will now discuss their significance with you.

(a) It is not difficult to see that expectant dread or general apprehensiveness stands in intimate relation to certain processes in the sexual life—let us say, to certain modes of libido-utilization. The simplest and most instructive case of this kind arises in people who expose themselves to what is called frustrated excitation, i.e. when a powerful sexual excitation experiences insufficient discharge and is not carried on to a satisfying termination. This occurs, for instance, in men during the time of an engagement to marry, and in women whose husbands are not sufficiently potent, or who perform the sexual act too rapidly or incompletely with a view to preventing conception. Under these conditions the libidinal excitation disappears and anxiety appears in place of it, both in the form of expectant dread and in that of attacks and anxiety-equivalents. The precautionary measure of *coitus interruptus*, when practised as a customary sexual régime, is so regularly the cause of anxiety-neurosis in men, and even more so in women, that medical practitioners would be wise to enquire first of all into the possibility of such an aetiology in all such cases. Innumerable examples show that the anxiety-neurosis vanishes when the sexual malpractice is given up.

So far as I know, the fact that a connection exists between sexual restraint and anxiety conditions is no longer disputed, even by physicians who hold aloof from psycho-analysis. Nevertheless I can well imagine that they do not neglect to invert the connection, and to put forward the view that such persons are predisposed to apprehensiveness and consequently practice caution in sexual matters. Against this, however, decisive evidence is found in the reactions in women, in whom the sexual function is essentially passive, so that its course is determined by the treatment accorded by the man. The more "temperament," i.e. the more inclination for sexual intercourse and capacity for satisfaction, a woman has, the more certainly will she react with anxiety manifestations to the man's impotence or to *coitus interruptus*; whereas such abuse entails far less serious results with anaesthetic women or those in whom the sexual hunger is less strong.

Sexual abstinence, which is nowadays so warmly recommended by physicians, of course only has the same significance for anxiety conditions when the libido which is denied a satisfactory outlet is correspondingly insistent,

and is not being utilized to a large extent in sublimation. Whether or not illness will ensue is indeed always a matter of the quantitative factor. Even apart from illness, it is easy to see in the sphere of character-formation that sexual restraint goes hand in hand with a certain anxiousness and cautiousness, whereas fearlessness and a boldly adventurous spirit bring with them a free tolerance of sexual needs. However these relations may be altered and complicated by the manifold influences of civilization, it remains incontestable that for the average human being anxiety is closely connected with sexual restriction.

I have by no means told you all the observations which point to this genetic connection between libido and anxiety. There is, for instance, the effect upon anxiety states of certain periods of life, such as puberty and the menopause, in which the production of libido is considerably augmented. In many states of excitement too, the mingling of sexual excitation with anxiety may be directly observed, as well as the final replacement of the libidinal excitation by anxiety. The impression received from all this is a double one; first, that it is a matter of an accumulation of libido, debarred from its normal utilization; and secondly, that the question is one of somatic processes only. How anxiety develops out of sexual desire is at present obscure; we can only ascertain that desire is lacking and anxiety is found in its place.

(b) A second clue is obtained from analysis of the psycho-neuroses, in particular, of hysteria. We have heard that anxiety frequently accompanies the symptoms in this disease, and that unattached anxiety may also be chronically present or come to expression in attacks. The patients cannot say what it is they fear; they link it up by unmistakable secondary elaboration to the most convenient phobias: of dying, of going mad, of having a stroke, etc. When we subject to analysis the situation in which the anxiety, or the symptom accompanied by anxiety, arose, we can as a rule discover what normal mental process has been checked in its course and replaced by a manifestation of anxiety. To express it differently: we construe the unconscious process as though it had not undergone repression and had gone through unhindered into consciousness. This process would have been accompanied by a particular affect and now we discover, to our astonishment, that this affect, which would normally accompany the mental process through into consciousness, is in every case replaced by anxiety, no matter what particular type it had previously been. So that when we have a hysterical anxiety condition before us, its unconscious correlative may be an excitation of a similar character, such as apprehension, shame, embarrassment; or quite as possibly a "positive" libidinal excitation; or an antagonistic, aggressive one, such as rage or anger.

Anxiety is thus general current coin for which all the affects are exchanged, or can be exchanged, when the corresponding ideational content is under repression.

(c) A third observation is provided by patients whose symptoms take the form of obsessive acts, and who seem to be remarkably immune from anxiety. When we restrain them from carrying out their obsessive performances, their washing, their ceremonies, etc., or when they themselves venture an attempt to abandon one of their compulsions, they are forced by an appalling dread to yield to the compulsion and to carry out the act. We perceive that the anxiety was concealed under the obsessive act and that this is only performed to escape the feeling of dread. In the obsessional neurosis, therefore, the anxiety which would otherwise ensue is replaced by the symptom-formation; and when we turn to hysteria we find a similar relation existing—as a consequence of the process of repression either a pure developed anxiety, or anxiety with symptom-formation, or symptom-formation without anxiety. In an abstract sense, therefore, it seems correct to say that symptoms altogether are formed purely for the purpose of escaping the otherwise inevitable development of anxiety. Thus anxiety comes to the forefront of our interest in the problems of the neuroses.

We concluded from our observations on the anxiety-neurosis that the diversion of the libido away from its normal form of utilization, a diversion which releases anxiety, took place on the basis of somatic processes. The analyses of hysterical and obsessional neuroses furnish the additional conclusion that a similar diversion with a similar result can follow from opposition on the part of institutions in the mind. We know as much as this, therefore, about the origin of neurotic anxiety; it still sounds rather indefinite. But for the moment I know of no path which will take us further. The second task we undertook, that of establishing a connection between neurotic anxiety (abnormally utilized libido) and “objective anxiety” (which corresponds with the reaction to danger), seems even more difficult to accomplish. One would think there could be no comparison between the two things, and yet there are no means by which the sensations of neurotic anxiety can be distinguished from those of real anxiety.

The desired connection may be found with the help of the antithesis, so often put forward, between the ego and the libido. As we know, the development of anxiety is the reaction of the ego to danger and the signal preparatory to flight; it is then not a great step to imagine that in neurotic anxiety also the ego is attempting a flight, from the demands of its libido, and is treating this internal danger as if it were an external one. Then our ex-



pectation, that where anxiety is present there must be something of which one is afraid, would be fulfilled. The analogy goes further than this, however. Just as the tension prompting the attempt to flee from external danger is resolved into holding one's ground and taking appropriate defensive measures, so the development of neurotic anxiety yields to a symptom-formation, which enables the anxiety to be "bound."

Our difficulty in comprehension now lies elsewhere. The anxiety which signifies the flight of the ego from its libido is nevertheless supposed to have had its source in the libido. This is obscure, and we are warned not to forget that the libido of a given person is fundamentally part of that person and cannot be contrasted with him as if it were something external. It is the question of the topographical dynamics of anxiety-development that is still obscure to us—what kind of mental energies are being expended and to what systems do they belong? I cannot promise you to answer this question also; but we will not neglect to follow up two other clues, and in so doing will again summon direct observation and analytic investigation to aid our speculation. We will turn to the sources of anxiety in children, and to the origin of the neurotic anxiety which is attached to phobias.

Apprehensiveness is very common among children, and it is difficult enough to decide whether it is objective or neurotic anxiety. Indeed the very value of this distinction is called in question by the attitude of children themselves. For on the one hand we are not surprised that children are afraid of strangers, of strange objects and situations, and we account for this reaction to ourselves very easily by reflecting on their weakness and ignorance. Thus we ascribe to the child a strong tendency to objective anxiety and should regard it as only practical if this apprehensiveness had been transmitted by inheritance. The child would only be repeating the behaviour of prehistoric man and of primitive man to-day who, in consequence of his ignorance and helplessness, experiences a dread of anything new and strange, and of much that is familiar to him, none of which any longer inspires fear in us. It would also correspond to our expectations if the phobias of children were at least in part such as might be attributed to those primeval periods of human development.

On the other hand, it cannot be overlooked that children are not all equally apprehensive, and that the very children who are more than usually timid in the face of all kinds of objects and situations are just those who later on become neurotic. The neurotic disposition is therefore betrayed, amongst other signs, by a marked tendency to objective anxiety; apprehensiveness rather than nervousness appears to be primary; and we arrive at the conclu-

sion that the child, and later the adult, experiences a dread of the strength of his libido simply because he is afraid of everything. The derivation of anxiety from the libido itself would then be discarded; and investigation of the conditions of real anxiety would logically lead to the view that consciousness of personal weakness and helplessness—inferiority, as A. Adler calls it—when it is able to maintain itself into later life is the final cause of neurosis.

This sounds so simple and plausible that it has a claim on our attention. It is true that it would involve shifting the point of view from which we regard the problem of nervousness. That such feelings of inferiority do persist into later life—together with a disposition to anxiety and symptom-formation—seems so well established that much more explanation is required when, in an exceptional case, what we call “health” is the outcome. But what can be learnt from the close observation of apprehensiveness in children? The small child is first of all afraid of strange people; situations become important only on account of the people concerned in them, and objects always much later. But the child is not afraid of these strange people because he attributes evil intentions to them, comparing their strength with his weakness, and thus recognizing in them a danger to his existence, his safety, and his freedom from pain. Such a conception of a child, so suspicious and terrified of an overpowering aggressivity in the world, is a very poor sort of theoretical construction. On the contrary, the child starts back in fright from a strange figure because he is used to—and therefore expects—a beloved and familiar figure, primarily his mother. It is his disappointment and longing which are transformed into dread—his libido, unable to be expended, and at that time not to be held suspended, is discharged through being converted into dread. It can hardly be a coincidence too that in this situation, which is the prototype of childish anxiety, the condition of the primary anxiety state during birth, a separation from the mother, is again reproduced.

The first phobias of situations in children concern darkness and loneliness; the former is often retained throughout life; common to both is the desire for the absent attendant, for the mother, therefore. I once heard a child who was afraid of the darkness call out: “Auntie, talk to me, I’m frightened.” “But what good will that do? You can’t see me”; to which the child replied: “If someone talks, it gets lighter.” The longing felt *in* the darkness is thus transformed into fear *of* the darkness. Far from finding that neurotic anxiety is only secondary and a special case of objective anxiety, we see on the contrary that there is something in the small child which behaves like real anxiety and has an essential feature in common with neurotic anxiety—namely, origin in undischarged libido. Of genuine “objective anxiety” the child seems

to bring very little into the world. In all those situations which can become the conditions of phobias later, on heights, on narrow bridges over water, in trains and boats, the small child shows no fear—the less it knows the less it fears. It is much to be wished that it had inherited more of these life-preserving instincts; the task of looking after it and preventing it from exposing itself to one danger after another would have been very much lightened. Actually, you see, a child overestimates his powers, to begin with, and behaves without fear because he does not recognize dangers. He will run along the edge of the water, climb upon the window-sill, play with sharp things and with fire, in short, do anything that injures him and alarms his attendants. Since he cannot be allowed to learn it himself through bitter experience, it is entirely due to training that real anxiety does eventually awake in him.

Now if some children embrace this training in apprehensiveness very readily, and then find for themselves dangers which they have not been warned against, it is explicable on the ground that these children have inherently a greater amount of libidinal need in their constitution than others, or else that they have been spoiled early with libidinal gratifications. It is no wonder if those who later become nervous also belong to this type as children; we know that the most favourable circumstance for the development of a neurosis lies in the inability to tolerate a considerable degree of pent-up libido for any length of time. You will observe now that here the constitutional factor, which we have never denied, comes into its own. We protest only when others emphasize it to the exclusion of all other claims, and when they introduce the constitutional factor even where according to the unanimous findings both of observation and of analysis, it does not belong, or only plays a minor part.

Let us sum up the conclusions drawn from the observation of apprehensiveness in children: Infantile dread has very little to do with objective anxiety (dread of real danger), but is, on the other hand, closely allied to the neurotic anxiety of adults. It is derived like the latter from undischarged libido, and it substitutes some other external object or some situation for the love-object which it misses.

Now you will be glad to hear that the analysis of phobias has little more to teach us than we have learnt already. The same thing happens in them as in the anxiety of children; libido that cannot be discharged is continuously being converted into an apparently "objective" anxiety, and so an insignificant external danger is taken as a representative of what the libido desires. The agreement between the two forms of anxiety is not surprising; for infantile

phobias are not merely prototypes of those which appear later in anxiety-hysteria, but they are a direct preliminary condition and prelude of them. Every hysterical phobia can be traced back to a childish dread, of which it is a continuation, even if it has a different content and must be called by a different name. The difference between the two conditions lies in their mechanism. In order that the libido should be converted into anxiety in the adult it is no longer sufficient that the libido should be momentarily unable to be utilized. The adult has long since learned to maintain such libido suspended, or to apply it in different ways. But, when the libido is attached to a mental excitation which has undergone repression, conditions similar to those in the child, in whom there is not yet any distinction between conscious and unconscious, are re-established; and by a regression to the infantile phobia a bridge, so to speak, is provided by which the conversion of libido into anxiety can be conveniently effected. . . . [Elsewhere] we have treated repression at some length, but in so doing we have been concerned exclusively with the fate of the *idea* to be repressed; naturally, because this was easier to recognize and to present. But we have so far ignored the question of what happened to the *affect* attached to this idea, and now we learn for the first time that it is the immediate fate of the affect to be converted into anxiety, no matter what quality of affect it would otherwise have been had it run a normal course. This transformation of affect is, moreover, by far the more important effect of the process of repression. It is not so easy to present to you; for we cannot maintain the existence of unconscious affects in the same sense as that of unconscious ideas. An idea remains up to a point the same whether it is conscious or unconscious; we can indicate something that corresponds to an unconscious idea. But an affect is a process involving a discharge of energy, and it is to be regarded quite differently from an idea; without searching examination and clarification of our hypotheses concerning mental processes, we cannot tell what corresponds with it in the unconscious—and that cannot be undertaken here. However, we will preserve the impression we have gained, that the development of anxiety is closely connected with the unconscious system.

I said that conversion into anxiety, or better, discharge in the form of anxiety, was the immediate fate of libido which encounters repression; I must add that it is not the only or the final fate of it. In the neuroses, processes take place which are intended to prevent the development of anxiety, and which succeed in so doing by various means. In the phobias, for instance, two stages in the neurotic process are clearly discernible. The first effects the repressions and conversion of the libido into anxiety which is then attached to some ex-



ternal danger. The second consists in building up all those precautions and safeguards by which all contact with this externalized danger shall be avoided. Repression is an attempt at flight on the part of the ego from the libido which it feels to be dangerous; the phobia may be compared to a fortification against the outer danger which now stands for the dreaded libido. The weakness of this defensive system in the phobias is of course that the fortress which is so well guarded from without remains exposed to danger from within; projection externally of danger from libido can never be a very successful measure. In the other neuroses, therefore, other defensive systems are employed against the possibility of the development of anxiety; this is a very interesting part of the psychology of the neuroses. Unfortunately it would take us too far afield and also it would require a thorough grounding in special knowledge of the subject. I will merely add this. I have already spoken of the "counter-charges" that are instituted by the ego upon repression, which must be maintained so that the repression can persist. It is the task of this counter-charge to carry out the various forms of defence against the development of anxiety after repression.

To return to the phobias: I may now hope that you realize how inadequate it is to attempt merely to explain their content, and to take no interest in them apart from their derivation—this or that object or situation which has been made into a phobia. The content of the phobia has an importance comparable to that of the manifest dream—it is a façade. With all due modifications, it is to be admitted that among the contents of the various phobias many are found which, as Stanley Hall points out, are specially suited by phylogenetic inheritance to become objects of dread. It is even in agreement with this that many of these dreaded things have no connection with danger, except through a *symbolic* relation to it.

Thus we are convinced of the quite central position which the problem of anxiety fills in the psychology of the neuroses. We have received a strong impression of how the development of anxiety is bound up with the fate of the libido and with the unconscious system. There is only one unconnected thread, only one gap in our structure, the fact, which after all can hardly be disputed, that "objective anxiety" must be regarded as an expression of the ego's instinct for self-preservation.

## AN OUTLINE OF PSYCHOANALYSIS

*Part I: The Mind and Its Workings*

## CHAPTER I: THE PSYCHICAL APPARATUS

Psychoanalysis makes a basic assumption,<sup>1</sup> the discussion of which falls within the sphere of philosophical thought, but the justification of which lies in its results. We know two things concerning what we call our psyche or mental life: firstly, its bodily organ and scene of action, the brain (or nervous system), and secondly, our acts of consciousness, which are immediate data and cannot be more fully explained by any kind of description. Everything that lies between these two terminal points is unknown to us and, so far as we are aware, there is no direct relation between them. If it existed, it would at the most afford an exact localization of the processes of consciousness and would give us no help toward understanding them.

Our two hypotheses start out from these ends or beginnings of our knowledge. The first is concerned with localization. We assume that mental life is the function of an apparatus to which we ascribe the characteristics of being extended in space and of being made up of several portions—which we imagine, that is, as being like a telescope or microscope or something of the sort. The consistent carrying through of a conception of this kind is a scientific novelty, even though some attempts in that direction have been made previously.

We have arrived at our knowledge of this psychical apparatus by studying the individual development of human beings. To the oldest of these mental provinces or agencies we give the name of *id*. It contains everything that is inherited, that is present at birth, that is fixed in the constitution—above all, therefore, the instincts, which originate in the somatic organization and which find their first mental expression in the *id* in forms unknown to us.<sup>2</sup>

Under the influence of the real external world which surrounds us, one portion of the *id* has undergone a special development. From what was

---

This selection has been reprinted from *An Outline of Psychoanalysis* by Sigmund Freud, by permission of W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., Copyright 1949 by W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., pp. 13-32, 46-57, 120-124.

<sup>1</sup> It will be seen that this basic assumption is a double-barrelled one and is sometimes referred to by the author as two separate hypotheses. . . .—Trans.

<sup>2</sup> This oldest portion of the mental apparatus remains the most important throughout life, and it was the first subject of the investigations of psychoanalysis. (Throughout . . . the English word "instinct" is, with some misgivings, used to render the German "Trieb." The sense in which Freud uses the term is, in any case, made clear in the following pages.—Trans.)

originally a cortical layer, provided with organs for receiving stimuli and with apparatus for protection against excessive stimulation, a special organization has arisen which henceforward acts as an intermediary between the id and the external world. This region of our mental life has been given the name of *ego*.

The principal characteristics of the ego are these. In consequence of the relation which was already established between sensory perception and muscular action, the ego is in control of voluntary movement. It has the task of self-preservation. As regards *external* events, it performs that task by becoming aware of the stimuli from without, by storing up experiences of them (in the memory), by avoiding excessive stimuli (through flight), by dealing with moderate stimuli (through adaptation) and, finally, by learning to bring about appropriate modifications in the external world to its own advantage (through activity). As regards *internal* events, in relation to the id, it performs that task by gaining control over the demands of the instincts, by deciding whether they shall be allowed to obtain satisfaction, by postponing that satisfaction to times and circumstances favorable in the external world or by suppressing their excitations completely. Its activities are governed by consideration of the tensions produced by stimuli present within it or introduced into it. The raising of these tensions is in general felt as *unpleasure* and their lowering as *pleasure*. It is probable, however, that what is felt as pleasure or unpleasure is not the *absolute* degree of the tensions but something in the rhythm of their changes. The ego pursues pleasure and seeks to avoid unpleasure. An increase in unpleasure which is expected and foreseen is met by a *signal of anxiety*; the occasion of this increase, whether it threatens from without or within, is called a *danger*. From time to time the ego gives up its connection with the external world and withdraws into the state of sleep, in which its organization undergoes far-reaching changes. It may be inferred from the state of sleep that that organization consists in a particular distribution of mental energy.

The long period of childhood, during which the growing human being lives in dependence upon his parents, leaves behind it a precipitate, which forms within his ego a special agency in which this parental influence is prolonged. It has received the name of *superego*. In so far as the superego is differentiated from the ego or opposed to it, it constitutes a third force which the ego must take into account.

Thus, an action by the ego is as it should be if it satisfies simultaneously the demands of the id, of the superego and of reality, that is to say if it is able to reconcile their demands with one another. The details of the relation

between the ego and the superego become completely intelligible if they are carried back to the child's attitude toward his parents. The parents' influence naturally includes not merely the personalities of the parents themselves but also the racial, national, and family traditions handed on through them as well as the demands of the immediate social *milieu* which they represent. In the same way, an individual's superego in the course of his development takes over contributions from later successors and substitutes of his parents, such as teachers, admired figures in public life, or high social ideals. It will be seen that, in spite of their fundamental difference, the id and the superego have one thing in common: they both represent the influences of the past (the id the influence of heredity, the superego essentially the influence of what is taken over from other people), whereas the ego is principally determined by the individual's own experience, that is to say by accidental and current events.

This general pattern of a psychical apparatus may be supposed to apply equally to the higher animals which resemble man mentally. A superego must be presumed to be present wherever, as in the case of man, there is a long period of dependence in childhood. The assumption of a distinction between ego and id cannot be avoided.

Animal psychology has not yet taken in hand the interesting problem which is here presented.

## CHAPTER II: THE THEORY OF THE INSTINCTS

The power of the id expresses the true purpose of the individual organism's life. This consists in the satisfaction of its innate needs. No such purpose as that of keeping itself alive or of protecting itself from dangers by means of anxiety can be attributed to the id. That is the business of the ego, which is also concerned with discovering the most favorable and least perilous method of obtaining satisfaction, taking the external world into account. The superego may bring fresh needs to the fore, but its chief function remains the *limitation* of satisfactions.

The forces which we assume to exist behind the tensions caused by the needs of the id are called *instincts*. They represent the somatic demands upon mental life. Though they are the ultimate cause of all activity, they are by nature conservative; the state, whatever it may be, which a living thing has reached, gives rise to a tendency to re-establish that state so soon as it has been abandoned. It is possible to distinguish an indeterminate number of instincts and in common practice this is in fact done. For us, however, the important question arises whether we may not be able to derive all of these



various instincts from a few fundamental ones. We have found that instincts can change their aim (by displacement) and also that they can replace one another—the energy of one instinct passing over to another. This latter process is still insufficiently understood. After long doubts and vacillations we have decided to assume the existence of only two basic instincts, *Eros* and the *destructive instinct*. (The contrast between the instincts of self-preservation and of the preservation of the species, as well as the contrast between ego-love and object-love, fall within the bounds of *Eros*.) The aim of the first of these basic instincts is to establish ever greater unities and to preserve them thus—in short, to bind together; the aim of the second, on the contrary, is to undo connections and so to destroy things. We may suppose that the final aim of the destructive instinct is to reduce living things to an inorganic state. For this reason we also call it the *death instinct*. If we suppose that living things appeared later than inanimate ones and arose out of them, then the death instinct agrees with the formula that we have stated, to the effect that instincts tend toward a return to an earlier state. We are unable to apply the formula to *Eros* (the love instinct). That would be to imply that living substance had once been a unity but had subsequently been torn apart and was now tending toward re-union.<sup>3</sup>

In biological functions the two basic instincts work against each other or combine with each other. Thus, the act of eating is a destruction of the object with the final aim of incorporating it, and the sexual act is an act of aggression having as its purpose the most intimate union. This interaction of the two basic instincts with and against each other gives rise to the whole variegation of the phenomena of life. The analogy of our two basic instincts extends from the region of animate things to the pair of opposing forces—attraction and repulsion—which rule in the inorganic world.<sup>4</sup>

Modifications in the proportions of the fusion between the instincts have the most noticeable results. A surplus of sexual aggressiveness will change a lover into a sexual murderer, while a sharp diminution in the aggressive factor will lead to shyness or impotence.

There can be no question of restricting one or the other of the basic instincts to a single region of the mind. They are necessarily present everywhere. We may picture an initial state of things by supposing that the whole available energy of *Eros*, to which we shall henceforward give the name of *libido*, is present in the as yet undifferentiated ego-id and serves to neutralize

<sup>3</sup> Something of the sort has been imagined by poets, but nothing like it is known to us from the actual history of living substance.

<sup>4</sup> This picture of the basic forces or instincts, which still arouses much opposition among analysts, was already a familiar one to the philosopher Empedocles of Acragas [fifth century B.C.].

the destructive impulses which are simultaneously present. (There is no term analogous to "libido" for describing the energy of the destructive instinct.) It becomes relatively easy for us to follow the later vicissitudes of the libido; but this is more difficult with the destructive instinct.

So long as that instinct operates internally, as a death instinct, it remains silent; we only come across it after it has become diverted outward as an instinct of destruction. That the diversion should occur seems essential for the preservation of the individual; the musculature is employed for the purpose. When the superego begins to be formed, considerable amounts of the aggressive instinct become fixated within the ego and operate there in a self-destructive fashion. This is one of the dangers to health to which mankind become subject on the path to cultural development. The holding back of aggressiveness is in general unhealthy and leads to illness. A person in a fit of rage often demonstrates how the transition from restrained aggressiveness to self-destructiveness is effected, by turning his aggressiveness against himself: he tears his hair or beats his face with his fists—treatment which he would evidently have preferred to apply to someone else. Some portion of self-destructiveness remains permanently within, until it at length succeeds in doing the individual to death, not, perhaps, until his libido has been used up or has become fixated in some disadvantageous way. Thus it may in general be suspected that the *individual* dies of his internal conflicts but that the *species* dies of its unsuccessful struggle against the external world, when the latter undergoes changes of a kind that cannot be dealt with by the adaptations which the species has acquired.

It is difficult to say anything of the behavior of the libido in the id and in the superego. Everything that we know about it relates to the ego, in which the whole available amount of libido is at first stored up. We call this state of things absolute, *primary narcissism*. It continues until the ego begins to cathect<sup>5</sup> the presentations of objects with libido—to change narcissistic libido into *object libido*. Throughout life the ego remains the great reservoir from which libidinal cathexes (see footnote 5) are sent out on to objects and into which they are also once more withdrawn, like the pseudopodia of a body of protoplasm. It is only when someone is completely in love that the main quantity of libido is transferred on to the object and the object to some extent takes the place of the ego. A characteristic of libido which is important in life is its *mobility*, the ease with which it passes from one object to another.

<sup>5</sup> The words "cathexis" and "to cathect" are used as renderings of the German "*Besetzung*" and "*besetzen*." These are the terms with which Freud expresses the idea of psychical energy being lodged in or attaching itself to mental structures or processes, somewhat on the analogy of an electric charge.—Trans.

This must be contrasted with the *fixation* of libido to particular objects, which often persists through life.

There can be no question that the libido has somatic sources, that it streams into the ego from various organs and parts of the body. This is most clearly seen in the case of the portion of the libido which, from its instinctual aim, is known as sexual excitation. The most prominent of the parts of the body from which this libido arises are described by the name of *erotogenic zones*, though strictly speaking the whole body is an erotogenic zone. The greater part of what we know about Eros—that is, about its exponent, the libido—has been gained from the study of the sexual function, which, indeed, in the popular view, if not in our theory, coincides with Eros. We have been able to form a picture of the way in which the sexual impulse, which is destined to exercise a decisive influence on our life, gradually develops out of successive contributions from a number of component instincts, which represent particular erotogenic zones.

#### CHAPTER III: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SEXUAL FUNCTION

According to the popular view, human sexual life consists essentially in the impulse to bring one's own genitals into contact with those of someone of the opposite sex. With this are associated, as accessory phenomena and introductory acts, kissing this extraneous body, looking at and touching it. This impulse is supposed to make its appearance at puberty, that is, at the age of sexual maturity, and to serve the purposes of reproduction. Nevertheless, certain facts have always been known that fail to fit into the narrow framework of this view. (1) It is a remarkable fact that there are people who are only attracted by the persons and genitals of members of their own sex. (2) It is equally remarkable that there are people whose desires behave in every way like sexual ones, but who at the same time entirely disregard the sexual organs or their normal use; people of this kind are known as "perverts." (3) And finally it is striking that many children (who are on that account regarded as degenerates) take a very early interest in their genitals and show signs of excitation in them.

It may well be believed that psychoanalysis provoked astonishment and denials when, partly upon the basis of these three neglected facts, it contradicted all the popular opinions upon sexuality. Its principal findings are as follows:

(a) Sexual life does not begin only at puberty, but starts with clear manifestations soon after birth.

(b) It is necessary to distinguish sharply between the concepts of "sexual"

and "genital." The former is the wider concept and includes many activities that have nothing to do with the genitals.

(c) Sexual life comprises the function of obtaining pleasure from zones of the body—a function which is subsequently brought into the service of that of reproduction. The two functions often fail to coincide completely.

The chief interest is naturally focused upon the first of these assertions, the most unexpected of all. It has been found that in early childhood there are signs of bodily activity to which only ancient prejudice could deny the name of sexual, and which are connected with mental phenomena that we come across later in adult love, such as fixation to a particular object, jealousy, and so on. It is further found that these phenomena which emerge in early childhood form part of a regular process of development, that they undergo a steady increase and reach a climax toward the end of the fifth year, after which there follows a lull. During this lull, progress is at a standstill and much is unlearned and undone. After the end of this period of latency, as it is called, sexual life is resumed with puberty, or, as we might say, it has a second efflorescence. Here we come upon the fact that the onset of sexual life is *diphasic*, that it occurs in two waves; this is unknown except in man and evidently has an important bearing upon his genesis.<sup>6</sup> It is not a matter of indifference that, with few exceptions, the events of the early period of sexuality fall a victim to *infantile amnesia*. Our understanding of the etiology of the neuroses and the technique of analytic therapy are derived from these views; and the tracing of the process of development in this early period has also provided evidence for yet other conclusions.

The first organ to make its appearance as an erotogenic zone and to make libidinal demands upon the mind is, from the time of birth onward, the mouth. To begin with, all mental activity is centered upon the task of providing satisfaction for the needs of that zone. In the first instance, of course, the latter serves the purposes of self-preservation by means of nourishment; but physiology should not be confused with psychology. The baby's obstinate persistence in sucking gives evidence at an early stage of a need for satisfaction which, although it originates from and is stimulated by the taking of nourishment, nevertheless seeks to obtain pleasure independently of nourishment and for that reason may and should be described as "sexual."

<sup>6</sup> Cf. the hypothesis that man is descended from a mammal which reached sexual maturity at the age of five, but that some great external influence was brought to bear upon the species and interrupted the straight line of development of sexuality. This may also have been related to some other transformations in the sexual life of man as compared with that of animals, such as the suppression of the periodicity of the libido and the exploitation of the part played by menstruation in the relation between the sexes.



Sadistic impulses already begin to occur sporadically during the oral phase along with the appearance of the teeth. Their extent increases greatly during the second phase, which we describe as the sadistic-anal phase, because satisfaction is then sought in aggression and in the excretory function. We justify our inclusion of aggressive impulses in the libido by supposing that sadism is an instinctual fusion of purely libidinal and purely destructive impulses, a fusion which thenceforward persists without interruption.<sup>7</sup>

The third phase is the so-called phallic one, which is, as it were, a forerunner of the final shape of sexual life, and already greatly resembles it. It is to be noted that what comes in question at this stage is not the genitals of both sexes but only those of the male (the phallus). The female genitals long remain unknown: in the child's attempt at understanding sexual processes, he pays homage to the venerable cloacal theory—a theory which has a genetic justification.<sup>8</sup>

With the phallic phase and in the course of it the sexuality of early childhood reaches its height and approaches its decline. Thenceforward boys and girls have different histories. To begin with, both place their intellectual activity at the service of sexual research; both start off from the presumption of the universal presence of the penis. But now the paths of the sexes divide. The boy enters the Oedipus phase; he begins to manipulate his penis, and simultaneously has phantasies of carrying out some sort of activity with it in relation to his mother; but at last, owing to the combined effect of a threat of castration and the spectacle of women's lack of a penis, he experiences the greatest trauma of his life, and this introduces the period of latency with all its attendant consequences. The girl, after vainly attempting to do the same as the boy, comes to recognize her lack of a penis or rather the inferiority of her clitoris, with permanent effects upon the development of her character; and, as a result of this first disappointment in rivalry, she often turns away altogether from sexual life.

It would be a mistake to suppose that these three phases succeed one another in a clear-cut fashion: one of them may appear in addition to another, they may overlap one another, they may be present simultaneously.

In the earlier phases the separate component instincts set about their pur-

<sup>7</sup> The question arises whether satisfaction of purely destructive instinctual impulses can be felt as pleasure, whether pure destructiveness without any libidinal component occurs. Satisfaction of what remains in the ego of the death instinct seems not to produce feelings of pleasure, although masochism represents a fusion which is precisely analogous to sadism.

<sup>8</sup> The occurrence of early vaginal excitations is often asserted. But it is most probably a question of excitations in the clitoris, that is, in an organ analogous to the penis, so that this fact would not preclude us from describing the phase as phallic.

suit of pleasure independently of one another; in the phallic phase there are the first signs of an organization which subordinates the other trends to the primacy of the genitals and signifies the beginning of a co-ordination of the general pursuit of pleasure into the sexual function. The complete organization is not attained until puberty, in a fourth, or genital, phase. A state of affairs is then established in which (1) many earlier libidinal cathexes are retained, (2) others are included in the sexual function as preparatory or auxiliary acts, their satisfaction producing what is known as fore-pleasure, and (3) other tendencies are excluded from the organization, and are either entirely suppressed (repressed) or are employed in the ego in some other way, forming character-traits or undergoing sublimation with a displacement of their aims.

This process is not always carried out perfectly. Inhibitions in the course of its development manifest themselves as the various disturbances of sexual life. Fixations of the libido to conditions at earlier phases are then found, the trend of which, moving independently of the normal sexual aim, is described as *perversion*. One example of an inhibition in development of this kind is homosexuality, if it is manifest. Analysis shows that in every case a homosexual attachment to an object has at one time been present and in most cases has persisted in a latent condition. The situation is complicated by the fact that the processes necessary for bringing about a normal outcome are not for the most part either completely present or completely absent; they are as a rule *partially* present, so that the final result remains dependent upon *quantitative* relations. Thus genital organization will be attained, but will be weakened in respect of those portions of the libido which have not proceeded so far but have remained fixated to pregenital objects and aims. Such weakening shows itself in a tendency, if there is an absence of genital satisfaction or if there are difficulties in the real world, for the libido to return to its earlier pregenital cathexes (*i.e.* to *regress*).

During the study of the sexual functions it has been possible to gain a first, preliminary conviction, or rather suspicion, of two pieces of knowledge which will later be found to be important over the whole of our field. Firstly, the normal and abnormal phenomena that we observe (that is, the phenomenology of the subject) require to be described from the point of view of dynamics and of economics (*i.e.*, in this connection, from the point of view of the quantitative distribution of the libido). And secondly, the etiology of the disturbances which we are studying is to be found in the developmental history of the individual, that is to say, in the early part of his life. . . .

## CHAPTER V: DREAM INTERPRETATION AS ILLUSTRATION

An investigation of normal, stable states, in which the frontiers of the ego are safeguarded against the id by resistances (or anti-cathexes) and have held firm, and in which the superego is not distinguished from the ego because they work together harmoniously—an investigation of this kind would teach us little. The only things that can help us are states of conflict and rebellion, in which the material in the unconscious id has a prospect of forcing its way into the ego and into consciousness and in which the ego arms itself afresh against the invasion. Only under such conditions can we make observations which will confirm or correct our views upon the two partners. But our nightly sleep is precisely a state of this sort, and consequently our activity during sleep, which we perceive as dreams, is the most favorable object of our study. In this way, too, we avoid the familiar charge of basing our constructions of the normal life of the mind upon pathological findings; for dreams are regular events in the life of normal men, however much their characteristics may differ from the productions of our waking existence.

Dreams, as everyone knows, can be confused, unintelligible or positively senseless, their contents may contradict all that we know of reality, and we behave in them like insane people, since, so long as we are dreaming, we attribute objective reality to the material of our dreams. We can find our way toward understanding (or "interpreting") dreams, if we assume that what we recollect as the dream after we have waked up is not the true dream-process but only a façade behind which that process lies concealed. Here we have our distinction between *manifest* dream-material and *latent* dream-thoughts. The process which produces the former out of the latter is described as *dream-work*. The study of dream-work affords us an excellent example of the way in which unconscious material from the id—originally unconscious and repressed unconscious alike—forces itself upon the ego, becomes preconscious and, owing to the efforts of the ego, undergoes the modifications which we call *dream-distortion*. There are no features of the dream which cannot be explained in this fashion.

It is best to begin by pointing out that the formation of dreams can be provoked in two different ways. Either, on the one hand, an instinctual impulse which is as a rule suppressed (that is, an unconscious wish) finds enough strength during sleep to make an impression upon the ego, or, on the other hand, a desire left over from waking life, a preconscious chain of thought with all the conflicting impulses belonging to it, obtains reinforcement during sleep from an unconscious element. In short, dreams may arise

either from the id or from the ego. The mechanism of dream-formation is the same in both cases and so is the necessary dynamic precondition. The ego gives evidence of its origin from the id by occasionally ceasing its functions and permitting a reversion to an earlier state of things. It duly brings this about by breaking off its relations with the external world and withdrawing its cathexes from the sense organs. We shall be justified in saying that there arises at birth an instinct to return to the intra-uterine life that has been abandoned—an instinct to sleep. Sleep is a return of this kind to the womb. Since the waking ego controls the power of movement, that function is paralyzed in sleep, and accordingly a great part of the inhibitions imposed upon the unconscious id becomes superfluous. The withdrawal or diminution of these anti-cathexes thus allows the id what is now a harmless degree of liberty. The evidence of the share taken by the unconscious id in the formation of dreams is abundant and convincing. (a) Memory is far more comprehensive in dreams than in waking life. Dreams bring up recollections which the dreamer has forgotten, which are inaccessible to him when he is awake. (b) Dreams make an unlimited use of linguistic symbols, the meaning of which is for the most part unknown to the dreamer. Our experience, however, enables us to establish their sense. They probably originate from earlier phases in the development of speech. (c) Memory very often reproduces in dreams impressions from the dreamer's early childhood of which we can definitely assert not only that they had been forgotten but that they had become unconscious owing to repression. This is the explanation of the help—usually indispensable—afforded to us by dreams when, in the course of the analytic treatment of the neuroses, we attempt to reconstruct the early life of the dreamer. (d) Beyond this, dreams bring to light material which could not originate either from the dreamer's adult life or from his forgotten childhood. We are obliged to regard it as part of the *archaic heritage* which a child brings with him into the world, before any experience of his own, as a result of the experiences of his ancestors. We find elements corresponding to this phylogenetic material in the earliest human legends and in surviving customs. Thus dreams offer a source of human prehistory which is not to be despised.

But what makes dreams so invaluable for giving us knowledge is the circumstance that, when the unconscious material forces its way into the ego, it carries along with it its own methods of working. That is to say, the preconscious thoughts in which the unconscious material has found its expression are treated in the course of dream-work as though they were unconscious portions of the id; and, in the case of the other method of the formation of



dreams, the preconscious thoughts which have reinforced themselves with an unconscious instinctual impulse are reduced to the unconscious condition. It is only in this way that we can discover the laws that govern unconscious processes and the respects in which they differ from the rules that are familiar to us in waking thought. Thus dream-work is in its essence a case of an unconscious working-over of preconscious thought processes. To take an analogy from history: invading conquerors govern a conquered country, not according to the judicial system which they find in force there, but according to their own. But it is undeniable that the product of dream-work is a compromise. The ego-organization is not yet entirely paralyzed, and its influence is to be seen in the distortion imposed upon the unconscious material and in what is often a vain attempt at giving to the total result a shape that shall be not too unacceptable to the ego (by means of a secondary working-over or *secondary elaboration*). In our analogy this would be represented as signs of the continued resistance of the conquered people.

The laws governing unconscious processes, which come to light in this manner, are remarkable enough and suffice to explain the greater part of what seems strange to us about dreams. Above all there is a striking tendency to *condensation*, an inclination to form fresh unities out of elements which in our waking thoughts we should certainly have kept separate. As a consequence of this, a single element of the manifest dream often stands for a whole number of latent dream-thoughts, as though it were a combined allusion to all of them; and in general the dimensions of a manifest dream are extraordinarily small in comparison with the wealth of material from which it has sprung. Another peculiarity of dream-work, which is not completely divorced from the one already mentioned, is the ease with which mental intensities (or cathexes) are *displaced* from one element to another, so that it often happens that an element which was of no consequence in the dream-thoughts appears to be the clearest and accordingly the most important feature of the manifest dream, and, *vice versa*, that essential elements of the dream-thoughts are represented in the manifest dream by only the faintest allusions. Moreover, as a rule the existence of the most insignificant points in common between two elements is enough to enable the dream-work to replace one by the other for any other purpose. It will easily be imagined how greatly the difficulty of interpreting a dream and of revealing the relations between the manifest dream and the latent dream-thoughts can be increased by these mechanisms of condensation and displacement. From the evidence of the existence of these two tendencies toward condensation and displacement our theory infers that in the unconscious id the energy is in a

condition of free mobility, and that the id sets more store by the opportunity of discharging quantities of excitation than it does by any other consideration;<sup>9</sup> and our theory makes use of these two peculiarities in defining the character of the primary process which we have ascribed to the id.

The study of dream-work has taught us many other equally remarkable and important characteristics of the processes in the unconscious; but we can only mention a few of them here. The governing laws of logic have no sway in the unconscious; it might be called the Kingdom of the Illogical. Impulses with contrary aims exist side by side in the unconscious without any call being made for an adjustment between them. Either they have no effect whatever upon each other, or, if they do, no decision is made, but a compromise comes about which is senseless since it embraces mutually exclusive elements. Similarly, contraries are not kept apart from each other but are treated as though they were identical, so that in the manifest dream any element may also stand for its contrary. Certain philologists have found that the same holds good in the oldest languages, and that contraries such as "strong-weak," "light-dark," "high-deep" were originally expressed by the same roots, until two different modifications of the primitive word distinguished the two meanings. Remains of this original double meaning seem to have survived even in such a highly developed language as Latin in the use of words like *altus* ("high" and "deep") and *sacer* ("holy" and "accursed").

In view of the complication and multiplicity of the relations between the manifest dream and the latent material lying behind it, it may of course justly be asked how it is at all possible to deduce the one from the other and whether we rely upon lucky guesses, helped perhaps by a translation of the symbols that occur in the manifest dream. It can be said in reply that in the great majority of cases the problem can be satisfactorily solved, but only with the assistance of the associations provided by the dreamer himself to the elements of the manifest material. Any other procedure is arbitrary and can give no certain result. But the dreamer's associations bring to light intermediate links which we can then insert in the gap between the two and with the help of which we can recover the latent material of the dream and "interpret" it. It is not to be wondered at that this work of interpretation (acting in a direction opposite to that of the dream-work) fails occasionally to find a completely certain conclusion.

It remains for us to give a dynamic explanation of why it is in the first instance that the sleeping ego takes upon itself the task of dream-work. That

<sup>9</sup> An analogy is afforded by the non-commissioned officer who accepts a reprimand from his superior in silence but vents his anger upon the first innocent private whom he happens to meet.

explanation is fortunately easy to find. With the help of the unconscious, every dream in the process of formation makes a demand upon the ego for the satisfaction of an instinct (if it originates from the id) or for the solution of a conflict, the removal of a doubt, or the making of a decision (if it originates from a residue of preconscious activity in waking life). The sleeping ego, however, is focused upon the wish to maintain sleep; it regards this demand as a disturbance and seeks to get rid of the disturbance. The ego achieves this by what appears to be an act of compliance: it meets the demand with what is in the circumstances the innocent fulfillment of a wish and thus disposes of the demand. This replacement of a demand by the fulfillment of a wish remains the essential function of dream-work. It is perhaps worth while to illustrate this by three simple examples—a hunger dream, a dream of convenience, and a dream arising out of sexual desire. During his sleep a need for food stirs in the dreamer. He has a dream of a delicious meal and sleeps on. The choice, of course, was open to him of either waking up and eating something or of continuing his sleep. He decided in favor of the latter and satisfied his hunger by means of the dream: at all events for the time being—since if his hunger had persisted he would have had to wake up nevertheless. Here is the second example. The sleeper must wake up in order to be in time for his work at the hospital. But he sleeps on, and has a dream that he is at the hospital—but as a patient, who has no need to get up. Or again, a desire arises during the night for the enjoyment of a forbidden sexual object—a friend's wife. The sleeper dreams of sexual intercourse—not, however with this particular person but with someone else of the same name to whom he is in fact quite indifferent; or his objection to the desire may find expression in his mistress remaining completely anonymous.

Naturally every case is not so simple. Especially in those dreams that arise from residues of the previous day which have not been dealt with and which have merely obtained reinforcement during sleep from the unconscious, it is often hard to detect the unconscious motive force and its wish-fulfillment; but we may assume that it is always there. The assertion that dreams are wish-fulfillments will easily arouse scepticism when it is remembered how many dreams have a positively painful content or even wake the sleeper with anxiety, quite apart from the numerous dreams without any definite feeling-tone. But the objection based upon anxiety dreams cannot be sustained against analysis. It must not be forgotten that dreams are invariably the product of a conflict, that they are a kind of compromise structure. Something that is a satisfaction for the unconscious id may for that very reason be a cause of anxiety for the ego.

As the dream-work proceeds, at one time the unconscious will press forward more successfully, while at another time the ego will defend itself with greater energy. Anxiety dreams are mostly those whose material has undergone least distortion. If the demand made by the unconscious is too great, so that the sleeping ego is not in a position to ward it off by the means at its disposal, it abandons the wish to sleep and returns to waking life. We shall be taking all our observations into account if we say that every dream is an *attempt* to put aside a disturbance of sleep by means of a wish-fulfillment. The dream is thus the guardian of sleep. This attempt can be more or less completely successful; it can also fail—in which case the sleeper wakes up, apparently aroused by the dream itself. So, too, there are occasions when that excellent fellow the night watchman, whose business it is to regard the little township's sleep, has no alternative but to sound the alarm and rouse the sleeping townspeople.

We shall conclude these remarks with a statement that will justify the long time we have spent over the problem of the interpretation of dreams. Experience has shown that the unconscious mechanisms which we discovered from our study of dream-work and which gave us an explanation of the formation of dreams also help us to understand the puzzling symptoms which attract our interest to neuroses and psychoses. A coincidence of such a kind cannot fail to excite high hopes in us. . . .

### *Part III: The Theoretical Yield*

#### CHAPTER IX: THE INTERNAL WORLD

We have no way of conveying knowledge of a complicated set of simultaneous processes except by describing them successively; and thus it happens that all our accounts err in the first instance in the direction of one-sided simplification and must wait till they can be supplemented, reconstructed, and so set right.

The picture of an ego which mediates between the id and the external world, which takes over the instinctual demands of the former in order to bring them to satisfaction, which perceives things in the latter and uses them as memories, which, intent upon its self-preservation, is on guard against excessive claims from both directions, and which is governed in all its decisions by the injunctions of a modified pleasure principle—this picture actually applies to the ego only up to the end of the first period of childhood, till about the age of five. At about that time an important change has taken place. A portion of the external world has, at least partially, been given



up as an object and instead, by means of identification, taken into the ego—that is, has become an integral part of the internal world. This new mental agency continues to carry on the functions which have hitherto been performed by the corresponding people in the external world: it observes the ego, gives it orders, corrects it and threatens it with punishments, exactly like the parents whose place it has taken. We call this agency the *superego* and are aware of it, in its judicial functions, as our *conscience*. It is a remarkable thing that the superego often develops a severity for which no example has been provided by the real parents, and further that it calls the ego to task not only on account of its deeds but just as much on account of its thoughts and unexecuted intentions, of which it seems to have knowledge. We are reminded that the hero of the Oedipus legend too felt guilty for his actions and punished himself, although the compulsion of the oracle should have made him innocent in our judgment and in his own. The superego is in fact the heir to the Oedipus complex and only arises after that complex has been disposed of. For that reason its excessive severity does not follow a real prototype but corresponds to the strength which is used in fending off the temptation of the Oedipus complex. Some suspicion of this state of things lies, no doubt, at the bottom of the assertion made by philosophers and believers that the moral sense is not instilled into men by education or acquired by them in the course of social life, but is implanted in them from a higher source.

So long as the ego works in complete agreement with the superego, it is not easy to distinguish between their manifestations; but tensions and estrangements between them become very plainly visible. The torments caused by the reproaches of conscience correspond precisely to a child's dread of losing his parents' love, a dread which has been replaced in him by the moral agency. On the other hand, if the ego has successfully resisted a temptation to do something that would be objectionable to the superego, it feels its self-respect raised and its pride increased, as though it had made some precious acquisition. In this way the superego continues to act the rôle of an external world toward the ego, although it has become part of the internal world. During the whole of a man's later life it represents the influence of his childhood, of the care and education given to him by his parents, of his dependence on them—of the childhood which is so greatly prolonged in human beings by a common family life. And in all of this what is operating is not only the personal qualities of these parents but also everything that produced a determining effect upon them themselves, the tastes and standards of the social class in which they live and the characteristics and traditions of the race from

which they spring. Those who have a liking for generalizations and sharp distinctions may say that the external world, in which the individual finds himself exposed after being detached from his parents, represents the power of the present; that his id, with its inherited trends, represent the organic past; and that the superego, which comes to join them later, represents more than anything the cultural past, an after-experience of which, as it were, the child has to pass through during the few years of his early life. It is scarcely likely that such generalizations can be wholly correct. Some of the cultural acquisitions have undoubtedly left a deposit behind in the *id*; much of what is contributed by the superego will awaken an echo in the id; many of the child's new experiences will be intensified because they are repetitions of some primeval phylogenetic experience.

*Was du ererbt von deinen Vatern hast,  
Erwirb es, um es zu besitzen.*<sup>10</sup>

Thus the superego takes up a kind of intermediate position between the id and the external world; it unites in itself the influences of the present and of the past. In the emergence of the superego we have before us, as it were, an example of the way in which the present is changed into the past. . . .

<sup>10</sup> Goethe, *Faust*, Part I: "What thou hast inherited from thy fathers, acquire it to make it thine."

## GEORGE HERBERT MEAD

IT is only within relatively recent times that the study of mind has become an independent science, with an experimental basis and techniques and concepts of its own. Traditionally embedded in philosophical systems, psychological theories tended to reflect the partisan currents of metaphysical speculation. Especially from the time of Descartes (1596-1650), the directions and assumptions of psychological inquiry were characteristically set by a philosophical dualism which presumed a radical distinction between material and mental substances. For the Cartesian world-view, the distinctive attribute of matter was its extension in space. Since minds were nonmaterial, they were necessarily nonspatial. So a view of man emerged in which the body was considered a sort of machine, and the mind a sort of thinking spirit which inhabited the machine. But since only extended things were deemed measurable, and only measurable things deemed capable of scientific study, the mind and its problems were abandoned to the spiritual authorities, and science concerned itself with the dispositions of matter in motion. However, this left the problem of how physical events were connected with mental events, and attempts to solve the notorious mind-body problem often consisted in proposing far-fetched physiological hypotheses or in making theological appeals. Even so empirically minded a thinker as John Locke (1632-1704) could not overcome the almost canonical view that the mind is a special substance, irreclaimably set apart from, and precariously related to, an independent world of material things. Although isolated thinkers did, from time to time, rebel against such a disjunction, it was not until the nineteenth century, with the impact of Darwinism on European thought, that large numbers of investigators came to regard man as totally located in nature, as a product of natural evolution who was liable, body and mind, to scientific explanation and understanding. Initially, the new psychological speculations were frequently crude attempts to reduce mental to physical phenomena. For example, T. H. Huxley (1825-1895) claimed that, "The thoughts to which I am now giving utterance . . . are expressions of molecular changes in the matter of life which is the source of our other vital phenomena." But maturer reflection encouraged the view that science is a method of inquiry and not a privileged set of categories, that the scientist's purpose is to explain and not to deny the special characteristics of phenomena, and that it is possible for several orders of phenomena, and hence several branches of science, to co-exist.

This liberal view of science accompanied the revolt against dualism in nineteenth-century America. In 1879, Charles S. Peirce (1839-1914) remarked that "modern science and modern logic require us to stand on a very different platform than Descartes';" and Peirce, together with such vigorous intellects as William James (1842-1910), and later John Dewey, sought to construct the "new platform" in a movement known as Pragmatism—a philosophy dedicated to the notion that the value of a theory lies in its consequences. It was from within this philosophical tradition that George Herbert Mead (1863-1931), one of the "seminal minds" of

the Pragmatic movement, approached the problems of social psychology. Although Mead was active during the time when Freud was propounding his most potent ideas, the American philosopher does not give evidence, in his formal writings, of having been positively influenced by the thought of his great Viennese contemporary. Mead's psychology, in so far as it may be separated from his general philosophical concerns, does not stem from psychiatry.

Mead's thought, like that of his colleague John Dewey, reflects a preoccupation with biological adaptation and a preference for behavioristic explanation. But he rejects gross mechanistic explanations. Organic behavior, for example, cannot be understood in mechanistic terms, for an organism does not react mechanically to stimuli from the environment: "Organism and environment determine each other and are mutually dependent for their existence . . . the life-process, to be adequately understood, must be considered in terms of their inter-relations." On the psychological level behavior is to be understood in terms of acts, and acts are social, involving the cooperation of "at least two" actors. Through such participant action, and by means of communication (language and gesture), individuals "internalize" the social act and take "rôles." The self emerges through such rôle-taking: We *become* selves as we recognize what others expect of us. Mind too is a social emergent; thought is problem-solving activity; men live in an environment of meanings as well as in a mere physical or organic environment. Hence a science of psychology is continuous with, though not reducible to, the sciences of biology and physics.

Mead was a student of Josiah Royce (1855-1916) at Harvard, and later studied in Germany. Joining Dewey at the University of Chicago in 1893, he moved gradually from Hegelianism to Pragmatism and Experimentalism. Though he wrote many important articles in his lifetime and was an inspiring teacher, his books were all published posthumously. *The Philosophy of the Present* (1932), *Movements of Thought in the Nineteenth Century* (1936), and *The Philosophy of the Act* (1938) have all been widely read, but his most influential work has been *Mind, Self and Society* (1934), from which the following selection has been taken.



## MIND, SELF AND SOCIETY

### Part III: The Self

#### CHAPTER XVIII: THE SELF AND THE ORGANISM

. . . The self has a character which is different from that of the physiological organism proper. The self is something which has a development; it is not initially there, at birth, but arises in the process of social experience and

---

This selection has been reprinted from George Herbert Mead, *Mind, Self and Society* (pp. 135-136, 138-140, 150-152, 153-160, 173-178, 196-198, 209-212, 221-222, Copyright 1934 by the University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Ill.) by permission of the publisher.



activity, that is, develops in the given individual as a result of his relations to that process as a whole and to other individuals within that process. The intelligence of the lower forms of animal life, like a great deal of human intelligence, does not involve a self. In our habitual actions, for example, in our moving about in a world that is simply there and to which we are so adjusted that no thinking is involved, there is a certain amount of sensuous experience such as persons have when they are just waking up, a bare there-ness of the world. Such characters about us may exist in experience without taking their place in relationship to the self. One must, of course, under those conditions, distinguish between the experience that immediately takes place and our own organization of it into the experience of the self. One says upon analysis that a certain item had its place in his experience, in the experience of his self. We do inevitably tend at a certain level of sophistication to organize all experience into that of a self. We do so intimately identify our experiences, especially our affective experiences, with the self that it takes a moment's abstraction to realize that pain and pleasure can be there without being the experience of the self. Similarly, we normally organize our memories upon the string of our self. If we date things we always date them from the point of view of our past experiences. We frequently have memories that we cannot date, that we cannot place. A picture comes before us suddenly and we are at a loss to explain when that experience originally took place. We remember perfectly distinctly the picture, but we do not have it definitely placed, and until we can place it in terms of our past experience we are not satisfied. Nevertheless, I think it is obvious when one comes to consider it that the self is not necessarily involved in the life of the organism, nor involved in what we term our sensuous experience, that is, experience in a world about us for which we have habitual reactions.

We can distinguish very definitely between the self and the body. The body can be there and can operate in a very intelligent fashion without there being a self involved in the experience. The self has the characteristic that it is an object to itself, and that characteristic distinguishes it from other objects and from the body. It is perfectly true that the eye can see the foot, but it does not see the body as a whole. We cannot see our backs; we can feel certain portions of them, if we are agile, but we cannot get an experience of our whole body. There are, of course, experiences which are somewhat vague and difficult of location, but the bodily experiences are for us organized about a self. The foot and hand belong to the self. We can see our feet, especially if we look at them from the wrong end of an opera glass, as strange things which we have difficulty in recognizing as our own. The parts of the body

are quite distinguishable from the self. We can lose parts of the body without any serious invasion of the self. The mere ability to experience different parts of the body is not different from the experience of a table. The table presents a different feel from what the hand does when one hand feels another, but it is an experience of something with which we come definitely into contact. The body does not experience itself as a whole, in the sense in which the self in some way enters into the experience of the self. . . .

The individual experiences himself as such, not directly, but only indirectly, from the particular standpoints of other individual members of the same social group, or from the generalized standpoint of the social group as a whole to which he belongs. For he enters his own experience as a self or individual, not directly or immediately, not by becoming a subject to himself, but only in so far as he first becomes an object to himself just as other individuals are objects to him or in his experience; and he becomes an object to himself only by taking the attitudes of other individuals toward himself within a social environment or context of experience and behavior in which both he and they are involved.

The importance of what we term "communication" lies in the fact that it provides a form of behavior in which the organism or the individual may become an object to himself. It is . . . not communication in the sense of the cluck of the hen to the chickens, or the bark of a wolf to the pack, or the lowing of a cow, but communication in the sense of significant symbols, communication which is directed not only to others but also to the individual himself. So far as that type of communication is a part of behavior it at least introduces a self. Of course, one may hear without listening; one may see things that he does not realize; do things that he is not really aware of. But it is where one does respond to that which he addresses to another and where that response of his own becomes a part of his conduct, where he not only hears himself but responds to himself, talks and replies to himself as truly as the other person replies to him, that we have behavior in which the individuals become objects to themselves.

Such a self is not, I would say, primarily the physiological organism. The physiological organism is essential to it, but we are at least able to think of a self without it. Persons who believe in immortality, or believe in ghosts, or in the possibility of the self leaving the body, assume a self which is quite distinguishable from the body. How successfully they can hold these conceptions is an open question, but we do, as a fact, separate the self and the organism. It is fair to say that the beginning of the self as an object, so far as we can see, is to be found in the experiences of people that lead to the con-

ception of a "double." Primitive people assume that there is a double, located presumably in the diaphragm, that leaves the body temporarily in sleep and completely in death. It can be enticed out of the body of one's enemy and perhaps killed. . . .

#### CHAPTER XIX: THE BACKGROUND OF THE GENESIS OF THE SELF

. . . We find in children something that answers to this double, namely, the invisible, imaginary companions which a good many children produce in their own experience. They organize in this way the responses which they call out in other persons and call out also in themselves. Of course, this playing with an imaginary companion is only a peculiarly interesting phase of ordinary play. Play in this sense, especially the stage which precedes the organized games, is a play at something. A child plays at being a mother, at being a teacher, at being a policeman; that is, it is taking different rôles, as we say. We have something that suggests this in what we call the play of animals: a cat will play with her kittens, and dogs play with each other. Two dogs playing with each other will attack and defend, in a process which if carried through would amount to an actual fight. There is a combination of responses which checks the depth of the bite. But we do not have in such a situation the dogs taking a definite rôle in the sense that a child deliberately takes the rôle of another. This tendency on the part of the children is what we are working with in the kindergarten where the rôles which the children assume are made the basis for training. When a child does assume a rôle he has in himself the stimuli which call out that particular response or group of responses. He may, of course, run away when he is chased, as the dog does, or he may turn around and strike back just as the dog does in his play. But that is not the same as playing at something. Children get together to "play Indian." This means that the child has a certain set of stimuli which call out in itself the responses that they would call out in others, and which answer to an Indian. In the play period the child utilizes his own responses to these stimuli which he makes use of in building a self. The response which he has a tendency to make to these stimuli organizes them. He plays that he is, for instance, offering himself something, and he buys it; he gives a letter to himself and takes it away; he addresses himself as a parent, as a teacher; he arrests himself as a policeman. He has a set of stimuli which call out in himself the sort of responses they call out in others. He takes his group of responses and organizes them into a certain whole. Such is the simplest form of being another to one's self. It involves a temporal situation. The child says something in one character and responds in another

character, and then his responding in another character is a stimulus to himself in the first character, and so the conversation goes on. A certain organized structure arises in him and in his other which replies to it, and these carry on the conversation of gestures between themselves.

If we contrast play with the situation in an organized game, we note the essential difference that the child who plays in a game must be ready to take the attitude of everyone else involved in that game, and that these different rôles must have a definite relationship to each other. Taking a very simple game such as hide-and-seek, everyone with the exception of the one who is hiding is a person who is hunting. A child does not require more than the person who is hunted and the one who is hunting. If a child is playing in the first sense he just goes on playing, but there is no basic organization gained. In that early stage he passes from one rôle to another just as a whim takes him. But in a game where a number of individuals are involved, then the child taking one rôle must be ready to take the rôle of everyone else. If he gets in a ball nine he must have the responses of each position involved in his own position. He must know what everyone else is going to do in order to carry out his own play. He has to take all of these rôles. They do not all have to be present in consciousness at the same time, but at some moments he has to have three or four individuals present in his own attitude, such as the one who is going to throw the ball, the one who is going to catch, and so on. These responses must be, in some degree, present in his own make-up. In the game, then, there is a set of responses of such others so organized that the attitude of one calls out the appropriate attitudes of the other.

This organization is put in the form of the rules of the game. Children take a great interest in rules. They make rules on the spot in order to help themselves out of difficulties. Part of the enjoyment of the game is to get these rules. Now, the rules are the set of responses which a particular attitude calls out. You can demand a certain response in others if you take a certain attitude. These responses are all in yourself as well. There you get an organized set of such responses as that to which I have referred, which is something more elaborate than the rôles found in play. Here there is just a set of responses that follow on each other indefinitely. At such a stage we speak of a child as not yet having a fully developed self. The child responds in a fairly intelligent fashion to the immediate stimuli that come to him, but they are not organized. He does not organize his life as we would like to have him do, namely, as a whole. There is just a set of responses of the type of play. The child reacts to a certain stimulus, and the reaction is in himself that is



called out in others, but he is not a whole self. In his game he has to have an organization of these rôles; otherwise he cannot play the game. The game represents the passage in the life of the child from taking the rôle of others in play to the organized part that is essential to self-consciousness in the full sense of the term. . . .

#### CHAPTER XX: PLAY, THE GAME AND THE GENERALIZED OTHER

. . . The fundamental difference between the game and play is that in the [former] <sup>1</sup> the child must have the attitude of all the others involved in that game. The attitudes of the other players which the participant assumes organize into a sort of unit, and it is that organization which controls the response of the individual. The illustration used was of a person playing baseball. Each one of his own acts is determined by his assumption of the action of the others who are playing the game. What he does is controlled by his being everyone else on that team, at least in so far as those attitudes affect his own particular response. We get then an "other" which is an organization of the attitudes of those involved in the same process.

The organized community or social group which gives to the individual his unity of self may be called "the generalized other." The attitude of the generalized other is the attitude of the whole community. Thus, for example, in the case of such a social group as a ball team, the team is the generalized other in so far as it enters—as an organized process or social activity—into the experience of any one of the individual members of it.

If the given human individual is to develop a self in the fullest sense, it is not sufficient for him merely to take the attitudes of other human individuals toward himself and toward one another within the human social process, and to bring that social process as a whole into his individual experience merely in these terms: he must also, in the same way that he takes the attitudes of other individuals toward himself and toward one another, take their attitudes toward the various phases or aspects of the common social activity or set of social undertakings in which, as members of an organized society or social group, they are all engaged; and he must then, by generalizing these individual attitudes of that organized society or social group itself, as a whole, act toward different social projects which at any given time it is carrying out, or toward the various larger phases of the general social process which constitutes its life and of which these projects are specific manifestations. This getting of the broad activities of any given social whole or organized society as such within the experiential field of any one of

<sup>1</sup> [The original reads "latter."]

the individuals involved or included in that whole is, in other words, the essential basis and prerequisite of the fullest development of that individual's self: only in so far as he takes the attitudes of the organized social group to which he belongs toward the organized, co-operative social activity or set of such activities in which that group as such is engaged, does he develop a complete self or possess the sort of complete self he has developed. And on the other hand, the complex co-operative processes and activities and institutional functionings of organized human society are also possible only in so far as every individual involved in them or belonging to that society can take the general attitudes of all other such individuals with reference to these processes and activities and institutional functionings, and to the organized social whole of experiential relations and interactions thereby constituted—and can direct his own behavior accordingly.

It is in the form of the generalized other that the social process influences the behavior of the individuals involved in it and carrying it on, i.e., that the community exercises control over the conduct of its individual members; for it is in this form that the social process or community enters as a determining factor into the individual's thinking. In abstract thought the individual takes the attitude of the generalized other toward himself, without reference to its expression in any particular other individuals; and in concrete thought he takes that attitude in so far as it is expressed in the attitudes toward his behavior of those other individuals with whom he is involved in the given social situation or act. But only by taking the attitude of the generalized other toward himself, in one or another of these ways, can he think at all; for only thus can thinking—or the internalized conversation of gestures which constitutes thinking—occur. And only through the taking by individuals of the attitude or attitudes of the generalized other toward themselves is the existence of a universe of discourse, as that system of common or social meanings which thinking presupposes at its context, rendered possible.

The self-conscious human individual, then, takes or assumes the organized social attitudes of the given social group or community (or of some one section thereof) to which he belongs, toward the social problems of various kinds which confront that group or community at any given time, and which arise in connection with the correspondingly different social projects or organized co-operative enterprises in which that group or community as such is engaged; and as an individual participant in these social projects or co-operative enterprises, he governs his own conduct accordingly. In politics, for example, the individual identifies himself with an entire political party and takes the organized attitudes of that entire party toward the rest of the

given social community and toward the problems which confront the party within the given social situation; and he consequently reacts or responds in terms of the organized attitudes of the party as a whole. He thus enters into a special set of social relations with all the other individuals who belong to that political party; and in the same way he enters into various other special sets of social relations, with various other classes of individuals respectively, the individuals of each of these classes being the other members of some one of the particular organized subgroups (determined in socially functional terms) of which he himself is a member within the entire given society or social community. In the most highly developed, organized, and complicated human social communities—those evolved by civilized man—these various socially functional classes or subgroups of individuals to which any given individual belongs (and with the other individual members of which he thus enters into a special set of social relations) are of two kinds. Some of them are concrete social classes or subgroups, such as political parties, clubs, corporations, which are all actually functional social units, in terms of which their individual members are directly related to one another. The others are abstract social classes or subgroups, such as the class of debtors and the class of creditors, in terms of which their individual members are related to one another only more or less indirectly, and which only more or less indirectly function as social units, but which afford or represent unlimited possibilities for the widening and ramifying and enriching of the social relations among all the individual members of the given society as an organized and unified whole. The given individual's membership in several of these abstract social classes or subgroups makes possible his entrance into definite social relations (however indirect) with an almost infinite number of other individuals who also belong to or are included within one or another of these abstract social classes or subgroups cutting across functional lines of demarcation which divide different human social communities from one another, and including individual members from several (in some cases from all) such communities. Of these abstract social classes or subgroups of human individuals the one which is most inclusive and extensive is, of course, the one defined by the logical universe of discourse (or system of universally significant symbols) determined by the participation and communicative interaction of individuals; for of all such classes or subgroups, it is the one which claims the largest number of individual members, and which enables the largest conceivable number of human individuals to enter into some sort of social relation, however indirect or abstract it may be, with one another—a relation arising from the universal

functioning of gestures as significant symbols in the general human social process of communication.

I have pointed out, then, that there are two general stages in the full development of the self. At the first of these stages, the individual's self is constituted simply by an organization of the particular attitudes of other individuals toward himself and toward one another in the specific social acts in which he participates with them. But at the second stage in the full development of the individual's self that self is constituted not only by an organization of these particular individual attitudes, but also by an organization of the social attitudes of the generalized other or the social group as a whole to which he belongs. These social or group attitudes are brought within the individual's field of direct experience, and are included as elements in the structure or constitution of his self, in the same way that the attitudes of particular other individuals are; and the individual arrives at them, or succeeds in taking them, by means of further organizing, and then generalizing, the attitudes of particular other individuals in terms of their organized social bearings and implications. So the self reaches its full development by organizing these individual attitudes of others into the organized social or group attitudes, and by thus becoming an individual reflection of the general systematic pattern of social or group behavior in which it and the others are all involved—a pattern which enters as a whole into the individual's experience in terms of these organized group attitudes which, through the mechanism of his central nervous system, he takes toward himself, just as he takes the individual attitudes of others.

The game has a logic, so that such an organization of the self is rendered possible: there is a definite end to be obtained; the actions of the different individuals are all related to each other with reference to that end so that they do not conflict; one is not in conflict with himself in the attitude of another man on the team. If one has the attitude of the person throwing the ball he can also have the response of catching the ball. The two are related so that they further the purpose of the game itself. They are interrelated in a unitary, organic fashion. There is a definite unity, then, which is introduced into the organization of other selves when we reach such a stage as that of the game, as over against the situation of play where there is a simple succession of one rôle after another, a situation which is, of course, characteristic of the child's own personality. The child is one thing at one time and another at another, and what he is at one moment does not determine what he is at another. That is both the charm of childhood as well as its inadequacy. You cannot count on the child; you cannot assume that all the



things he does are going to determine what he will do at any moment. He is not organized into a whole. The child has no definite character, no definite personality.

The game is then an illustration of the situation out of which an organized personality arises. In so far as the child does take the attitude of the other and allows that attitude of the other to determine the thing he is going to do with reference to a common end, he is becoming an organic member of society. He is taking over the morale of that society and is becoming an essential member of it. He belongs to it in so far as he does allow the attitude of the other that he takes to control his own immediate expression. What is involved here is some sort of an organized process. That which is expressed in terms of the game is, of course, being continually expressed in the social life of the child, but this wider process goes beyond the immediate experience of the child himself. The importance of the game is that it lies entirely inside of the child's own experience, and the importance of our modern type of education is that it is brought as far as possible within this realm. The different attitudes that a child assumes are so organized that they exercise a definite control over his response, as the attitudes in a game control his own immediate response. In the game we get an organized other, a generalized other, which is found in the nature of the child itself, and finds its expression in the immediate experience of the child. And it is that organized activity in the child's own nature controlling the particular response which gives unity, and which builds up his own self.

What goes on in the game goes on in the life of the child all the time. He is continually taking the attitudes of those about him, especially the rôles of those who in some sense control him and on whom he depends. He gets the function of the process in an abstract sort of a way at first. It goes over from the play into the game in a real sense. He has to play the game. The morale of the game takes hold of the child more than the larger morale of the whole community. The child passes into the game and the game expresses a social situation in which he can completely enter; its morale may have a greater hold on him than that of the family to which he belongs or the community in which he lives. There are all sorts of social organizations, some of which are fairly lasting, some temporary, into which the child is entering, and he is playing a sort of social game in them. It is a period in which he likes "to belong," and he gets into organizations which come into existence and pass out of existence. He becomes a something which can function in the organized whole, and thus tends to determine himself in his relationship with the group to which he belongs. That process is one which is a striking stage

in the development of the child's morale. It constitutes him a self-conscious member of the community to which he belongs. . . .

#### CHAPTER XXII: THE "I" AND THE "ME"

We have discussed at length the social foundations of the self, and hinted that the self does not consist simply in the bare organization of social attitudes. We may now explicitly raise the question as to the nature of the "I" which is aware of the social "me." I do not mean to raise the metaphysical question of how a person can be both "I" and "me," but to ask for the significance of this distinction from the point of view of conduct itself. Where in conduct does the "I" come in as over against the "me"? If one determines what his position is in society and feels himself as having a certain function and privilege, these are all defined with reference to an "I," but the "I" is not a "me" and cannot become a "me." We may have a better self and a worse self, but that again is not the "I" as over against the "me," because they are both selves. We approve of one and disapprove of the other, but when we bring up one or the other they are there for such approval as "me's." The "I" does not get into the limelight; we talk to ourselves, but do not see ourselves. The "I" reacts to the self which arises through the taking of the attitudes of others. Through taking those attitudes we have introduced the "me" and we react to it as an "I."

The simplest way of handling the problem would be in terms of memory. I talk to myself, and I remember what I said and perhaps the emotional content that went with it. The "I" of this moment is present in the "me" of the next moment. There again I cannot turn around quick enough to catch myself. I become a "me" in so far as I remember what I said. The "I" can be given, however, this functional relationship. It is because of the "I" that we say that we are never fully aware of what we are, that we surprise ourselves by our own action. It is as we act that we are aware of ourselves. It is in memory that the "I" is constantly present in experience. We can go back directly a few moments in our experience, and then we are dependent upon memory images for the rest. So that the "I" in memory is there as the spokesman of the self of the second, or minute, or day ago. As given, it is a "me," but it is a "me" which was the "I" at the earlier time. If you ask, then, where directly in your own experience the "I" comes in, the answer is that it comes in as a historical figure. It is what you were a second ago that is the "I" of the "me." It is another "me" that has to take that rôle. You cannot get the immediate response of the "I" in the process. The "I" is in a certain sense that with which we do identify ourselves. The getting of it into

experience constitutes one of the problems of most of our conscious experience; it is not directly given in experience.

The "I" is the response of the organism to the attitudes of the others; the "me" is the organized set of attitudes of others which one himself assumes. The attitudes of the others constitute the organized "me," and then one reacts toward that as an "I." I now wish to examine these concepts in greater detail.

There is neither "I" nor "me" in the conversation of gestures; the whole act is not yet carried out, but the preparation takes place in this field of gesture. Now, in so far as the individual arouses in himself the attitudes of the others, there arises an organized group of responses. And it is due to the individual's ability to take the attitudes of these others in so far as they can be organized that he gets self-consciousness. The taking of all of those organized sets of attitudes gives him his "me"; that is the self he is aware of. He can throw the ball to some other member because of the demand made upon him from other members of the team. That is the self that immediately exists for him in his consciousness. He has their attitudes, knows what they want and what the consequence of any act of his will be, and he has assumed responsibility for the situation. Now, it is the presence of those organized sets of attitudes that constitutes that "me" to which he as an "I" is responding. But what that response will be he does not know and nobody else knows. Perhaps he will make a brilliant play or an error. The response to that situation as it appears in his immediate experience is uncertain, and it is that which constitutes the "I."

The "I" is his action over against that social situation within his own conduct, and it gets into his experience only after he has carried out the act. Then he is aware of it. He had to do such a thing and he did it. He fulfils his duty and he may look with pride at the throw which he made. The "me" arises to do that duty—that is the way in which it arises in his experience. He had in him all the attitudes of others, calling for a certain response; that was the "me" of that situation, and his response is the "I."

I want to call attention particularly to the fact that this response of the "I" is something that is more or less uncertain. The attitudes of others which one assumes as affecting his own conduct constitute the "me," and that is something that is there, but the response to it is as yet not given. When one sits down to think anything out, he has certain data that are there. Suppose that it is a social situation which he has to straighten out. He sees himself from the point of view of one individual or another in the group. These individuals, related all together, give him a certain self. Well, what is he going to do? He does not know and nobody else knows. He can get the situation into

his experience because he can assume the attitudes of the various individuals involved in it. He knows how they feel about it by the assumption of their attitudes. He says, in effect, "I have done certain things that seem to commit me to a certain course of conduct." Perhaps if he does so act it will place him in a false position with another group. The "I" as a response to this situation, in contrast to the "me" which is involved in the attitudes which he takes, is uncertain. And when the response takes place, then it appears in the field of experience largely as a memory image.

Our specious present as such is very short. We do, however, experience passing events; part of the process of the passage of events is directly there in our experience, including some of the past and some of the future. We see a ball falling as it passes, and as it does pass part of the ball is covered and part is being uncovered. We remember where the ball was a moment ago and we anticipate where it will be beyond what is given in our experience. So of ourselves; we are doing something, but to look back and see what we are doing involves getting memory images. So the "I" really appears experientially as a part of a "me." But on the basis of this experience we distinguish that individual who is doing something from the "me" who puts the problem up to him. The response enters into his experience only when it takes place. If he says he knows what he is going to do, even there he may be mistaken. He starts out to do something and something happens to interfere. The resulting action is always a little different from anything which he could anticipate. This is true even if he is simply carrying out the process of walking. The very taking of his expected steps puts him in a certain situation which has a slightly different aspect from what is expected, which is in a certain sense novel. That movement into the future is the step, so to speak, of the ego, of the "I." It is something that is not given in the "me."

Take the situation of a scientist solving a problem, where he has certain data which call for certain responses. Some of this set of data call for his applying such and such a law, while others call for another law. Data are there with their implications. He knows what such and such coloration means, and when he has these data before him they stand for certain responses on his part; but now they are in conflict with each other. If he makes one response he cannot make another. What he is going to do he does not know, nor does anybody else. The action of the self is in response to these conflicting sets of data in the form of a problem, with conflicting demands upon him as a scientist. He has to look at it in different ways. That action of the "I" is something the nature of which we cannot tell in advance.

The "I," then, in this relation of the "I" and the "me," is something that



is, so to speak, responding to a social situation which is within the experience of the individual. It is the answer which the individual makes to the attitude which others take toward him when he assumes an attitude toward them. Now, the attitudes he is taking toward them are present in his own experience, but his response to them will contain a novel element. The "I" gives the sense of freedom, of initiative. The situation is there for us to act in a self-conscious fashion. We are aware of ourselves, and of what the situation is, but exactly how we will act never gets into experience until after the action takes place.

Such is the basis for the fact that the "I" does not appear in the same sense in experience as does the "me." The "me" represents a definite organization of the community there in our own attitudes, and calling for a response, but the response that takes place is something that just happens. There is no certainty in regard to it. There is a moral necessity but no mechanical necessity for the act. When it does take place then we find what has been done. The above account gives us, I think, the relative position of the "I" and "me" in the situation, and the grounds for the separation of the two in behavior. The two are separated in the process but they belong together in the sense of being parts of a whole. They are separated and yet they belong together. The separation of the "I" and the "me" is not fictitious. They are not identical, for, as I have said, the "I" is something that is never entirely calculable. The "me" does call for a certain sort of an "I" in so far as we meet the obligations that are given in conduct itself, but the "I" is always something different from what the situation itself calls for. So there is always that distinction, if you like, between the "I" and the "me." The "I" both calls out the "me" and responds to it. Taken together they constitute a personality as it appears in social experience. The self is essentially a social process going on with these two distinguishable phases. If it did not have these two phases there could not be conscious responsibility, and there would be nothing novel in experience. . . .

#### CHAPTER XXV: THE "I" AND THE "ME" AS PHASES OF THE SELF

. . . The individual not only has rights, but he has duties; he is not only a citizen, a member of the community, but he is one who reacts to this community and in his reaction to it . . . changes it. The "I" is the response of the individual to the attitude of the community as this appears in his own experience. His response to that organized attitude in turn changes it. As we have pointed out, this is a change which is not present in his own experience until after it takes place. The "I" appears in our experience in memory. It is

only after we have acted that we know what we have done; it is only after we have spoken that we know what we have said. The adjustment to that organized world which is present in our own nature is one that represents the "me" and is constantly there. But if the response to it is a response which is of the nature of the conversation of gestures, if it creates a situation which is in some sense novel, if one puts up his side of the case, asserts himself over against others and insists that they take a different attitude toward himself, then there is something important occurring that is not previously present in experience. . . .

Such a novel reply to the social situation involved in the organized set of attitudes constitutes the "I" as over against the "me." The "me" is a conventional, habitual individual. It is always there. It has to have those habits, those responses which everybody has; otherwise the individual could not be a member of the community. But an individual is constantly reacting to such an organized community in the way of expressing himself, not necessarily asserting himself in the offensive sense but expressing himself, being himself in such a co-operative process as belongs to any community. The attitudes involved are gathered from the group, but the individual in whom they are organized has the opportunity of giving them an expression which perhaps has never taken place before. . . .

#### CHAPTER XXVII: THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE "I" AND THE "ME"

. . . [The] "me" may be regarded as giving the form of the "I." The novelty comes in the action of the "I," but the structure, the form of the self is one which is conventional.

This conventional form may be reduced to a minimum. In the artist's attitude, where there is artistic creation, the emphasis upon the element of novelty is carried to the limit. This demand for the unconventional is especially noticeable in modern art. Here the artist is supposed to break away from convention; a part of his artistic expression is thought to be in the break-down of convention. That attitude is, of course, not essential to the artistic function, and it probably never occurs in the extreme form in which it is often proclaimed. Take certain of the artists of the past. In the Greek world the artists were, in a certain sense, the supreme artisans. What they were to do was more or less set by the community, and accepted by themselves, as the expression of heroic figures, certain deities, the erection of temples. Definite rules were accepted as essential to the expression. And yet the artist introduced an originality into it which distinguishes one artist from another. In the case of the artist the emphasis upon that which is uncon-

ventional, that which is not in the structure of the "me," is carried as far, perhaps, as it can be carried.

This same emphasis also appears in certain types of conduct which are impulsive. Impulsive conduct is uncontrolled conduct. The structure of the "me" does not there determine the expression of the "I." If we use a Freudian expression, the "me" is in a certain sense a censor. It determines the sort of expression which can take place, sets the stage, and gives the cue. In the case of impulsive conduct this structure of the "me" involved in the situation does not furnish to any such degree this control. Take the situation of self-assertion where the self simply asserts itself over against others, and suppose that the emotional stress is such that the forms of polite society in the performance of legitimate conduct are overthrown, so that the person expresses himself violently. There the "me" is determined by the situation. There are certain recognized fields within which an individual can assert himself, certain rights which he has within these limits. But let the stress become too great, these limits are not observed, and an individual asserts himself in perhaps a violent fashion. Then the "I" is the dominant element over against the "me." Under what we consider normal conditions the way in which an individual acts is determined by his taking the attitude of the others in the group, but if the individual is not given the opportunity to come up against people, as a child is not who is held out of intercourse with other people, then there results a situation in which the reaction is uncontrolled.

Social control is the expression of the "me" over against the expression of the "I." It sets the limits, it gives the determination that enables the "I," so to speak, to use the "me" as the means of carrying out what is the undertaking that all are interested in. Where persons are held outside or beyond that sort of organized expression there arises a situation in which social control is absent. In the more or less fantastic psychology of the Freudian group, thinkers are dealing with the sexual life and with self-assertion in its violent form. The normal situation, however, is one which involves a reaction of the individual in a situation which is socially determined, but to which he brings his own responses as an "I." The response is, in the experience of the individual, an expression with which the self is identified. It is such a response which raises him above the institutionalized individual.

. . . [An] institution is, after all, nothing but an organization of attitudes which we all carry in us, the organized attitudes of the others that control and determine conduct. Now, this institutionalized individual is, or should be, the means by which the individual expresses himself in his own way, for such individual expression is that which is identified with the self in those

values which are essential to the self, and which arise from the self. To speak of them as arising from the self does not attach to them the character of the selfish egoist, for under the normal conditions to which we were referring the individual is making his contribution to a common undertaking. The baseball player who makes a brilliant play is making the play called for by the nine to which he belongs. He is playing for his side. A man may, of course, play the gallery, be more interested in making a brilliant play than in helping the nine to win, just as a surgeon may carry out a brilliant operation and sacrifice the patient. But under normal conditions the contribution of the individual gets its expression in the social processes that are involved in the act, so that the attachment of the values to the self does not involve egoism or selfishness. The other situation in which the self in its expression does in some sense exploit the group or society to which it belongs is one which sets up, so to speak, a narrow self which takes advantage of the whole group in satisfying itself. Even such a self is still a social affair. We distinguish very definitely between the selfish man and the impulsive man. The man who may lose his temper and knock another down may be a very unselfish man. He is not necessarily a person who would utilize a certain situation for the sake of his own interests. The latter case involves the narrow self that does not relate itself to the whole social group of which it is a part.

Values do definitely attach to this expression of the self which is peculiar to the self; and what is peculiar to the self is what it calls its own. And yet this value lies in the social situation, and would not be apart from that social situation. It is the contribution of the individual to the situation, even though it is only in the social situation that the value obtains. . . .

The value of an ordered society is essential to our existence, but there also has to be room for an expression of the individual himself if there is to be a satisfactorily developed society. A means for such expression must be provided. Until we have such a social structure in which an individual can express himself as the artist and the scientist does, we are thrown back on the sort of structure found in the mob, in which everybody is free to express himself against some hated object of the group.

One difference between primitive human society and civilized human society is that in primitive human society the individual self is much more completely determined, with regard to his thinking and his behavior, by the general pattern of the organized social activity carried on by the particular social group to which he belongs, than he is in civilized human society. In other words, primitive human society offers much less scope for individuality—for original, unique, or creative thinking and behavior on the part of the



individual self within it or belonging to it—than does civilized human society; and indeed the evolution of civilized human society from primitive human society has largely depended upon or resulted from a progressive social liberation of the individual self and his conduct, with the modifications and elaborations of the human social process which have followed from and been made possible by that liberation. In primitive society, to a far greater extent than in civilized society, individuality is constituted by the more or less perfect achievement of a given social type—a type already given, indicated, or exemplified in the organized pattern of social conduct, in the integrated relational structure of the social process of experience and behavior which the given social group exhibits and is carrying on; in civilized society individuality is constituted rather by the individual's departure from, or modified realization of, any given social type than by his conformity, and tends to be something much more distinctive and singular and peculiar than it is in primitive human society. But even in the most modern and highly-evolved forms of human civilization the individual, however original and creative he may be in his thinking or behavior, always and necessarily assumes a definite relation to, and reflects in the structure of his self or personality, the general organized pattern of experience and activity exhibited in or characterizing the social life-process in which he is involved, and of which his self or personality is essentially a creative expression or embodiment. No individual has a mind which operates simply in itself, in isolation from the social life-process in which it has arisen or out of which it has emerged, and in which the pattern of organized social behavior has consequently been basically impressed upon it.

# SELF, PERSON, AND SOCIETY

## 2. THE PERSON



## HARRY STACK SULLIVAN

AS one formulation has succeeded another in the recent history of the human sciences, it has appeared increasingly evident that no single set of concepts, and hence no single scientific discipline, is likely to explain the complex and enormously adaptive mechanisms of the human personality. Each abstraction—economic man, Freudian man, man the cultural animal, man the symbol-user, the tool-maker, the language-speaker, the player—illuminates a facet of the total subject, but often throws into the shadows other aspects which may be equally relevant to the understanding of man as a whole. In partial response to this fact, various attempts have been made in recent times to put these “men” together, and to integrate the sciences of man in the hope that inter-disciplinary cooperation may succeed where partial analysis has failed. Harry Stack Sullivan (1892–1949), American psychiatrist, was for many years a vigorous exponent of this approach. Trained as a clinician in the psychoanalytic school and himself a contributor to research on schizophrenia, Sullivan became less and less persuaded of the particular orientation of Freud and his followers. At the same time, he became increasingly attracted to certain non-Freudian currents in social psychology (as represented by Mead and Dewey) and to certain concepts of community and communication which he found in cultural anthropology (especially in the works of Sapir, Malinowski, and Benedict). His own personal fusion of these different strands has been labeled the “interpersonal theory of psychiatry.” Feeling that both Freud and Adolph Meyer (1866–1950), who focused on the individual person as the central unit of inquiry, had made “a very important contribution to the understanding of living,” Sullivan nonetheless insisted that such understanding must be tempered with a view of behavior seen “as the result of social rules.” His own system stresses patterns of human interaction. Mental ills (and by an extension of his analysis, social ills as well) are to be diagnosed in terms of breakdowns of communication, rather than as manifestations of frustrated biological needs. Indeed, for Sullivan, the sexual problems which Freud is commonly alleged (at the risk of oversimplification) to have emphasized as basic, are more often the symptoms than the causes of breakdown: “When difficulties in the sex life are presented by a patient as his reason for needing psychiatric help . . . the patient’s difficulty in living is best manifested by his very choice of this as his peculiar problem.” And again, “Quite frequently it is no trick at all to find something very much more serious than the sexual difficulty; and quite often the sexual difficulty is remedied in the process.” Individual persons are to be understood as portions of interpersonal fields, rather than as isolated entities; and at various stages in his development the individual will occupy a number of positions in various interpersonal fields, so that the resultant personality will be a product of the totality of these and would be unintelligible without reference to them—“the unique person is a complex derivative of many others.” In one phase of his work, Sullivan sought to delineate generic patterns of interaction, with the aim of being able to predict, with some reliability, how specific individuals (e.g., infants)



would respond to typical forces (e.g., parental) which differ from stage to stage in the individual's developmental career. At any period the individual may be vulnerable to anxiety, which is at once a cause and consequence of the breakdown of communication, and the therapeutic problem is to reestablish communication. When anxiety does not interfere, man is (in the words of one of Sullivan's interpreters) "positively directed toward goals of collaboration and of mutual satisfaction and security." It is understandable that Sullivan, toward the end of his life, would have been drawn to apply these concepts to nations, and to the problems of international anxiety.

A teacher as well as therapist and theorist, Sullivan was president of the William Alanson White Psychiatric Foundation. He served with distinction as psychiatric consultant to many governmental agencies; and, largely through his efforts, a standing committee was established in the American Psychiatric Association for the study of the relationships between psychiatry and the social sciences. Sullivan wrote extensively for a number of journals. His two published works are *Conceptions of Modern Psychiatry* (1947), from which the following selection has been taken, and *The Interpersonal Theory of Psychiatry* (published posthumously in 1953).



## CONCEPTIONS OF MODERN PSYCHIATRY

### LECTURE II: THE HUMAN ORGANISM AND ITS NECESSARY ENVIRONMENT

It has been suggested that a consideration of the meaning of psychiatry could carry us from the dimmest past through the work of innumerable people, with almost as many contradictory views—sometimes self-contradictory views—as there were workers. So also would a survey of the history of the meaning of man spread before us an ineffably wearisome account of circuitous progress in the face of stupendous obstacles created by man. As in the first case, so here we would come finally to a present view which is anything but universally accepted.

In the dreary progression, if our wits are not bemused, we would observe many views that represent what we now know that man is *not*. Man is not a creature of instinct—the view of Aristotle and of William McDougall; of transcendental powers between or among which he may choose his allegiance—the medieval view rather sympathetic to Otto Rank; of logic and its categorical opposite—Bacon and in a way Alfred Adler and Alfred Korzybski;

---

This selection has been reprinted from *Conceptions of Modern Psychiatry* by Harry Stack Sullivan, M.D., by permission of W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., Copyright 1953 by William Alanson White Psychiatric Foundation. Pages 14–27 have been taken from the 1947 edition.

of the evolution of social intellect—Compte and some mental hygienists; of racial fitness—de Gobineau and Führer Hitler; of a conflict of society and one's instincts—Freud; or of a racial unconscious—Jung.

As we survey the present, we can see four significant conceptions. For the general biologist, man is the most complexly integrated organism thus far evolved. For the psychobiologist, man is an individual organism the total function of which is mentally integrated life. For the social psychologist, man is the human animal transformed by social experiences into a human being. For the psychiatrist as a student of interpersonal relations, man is the tangible substrate of human life.

These definitions grow progressively more complex in scope. Let us consider the beginning of anyone, the fecundated ovum in the uterus. This cell manifests the basic categories of biological process. The cell carries almost stupifying potentialities. It exists as a demonstrable entity. It lives, however, and starts the realization of its potentialities, not as a unit organism surrounded by a suitable environment. It lives communally *with* the environment. Physico-chemical factors, substances, plentiful in the uterine environment flow into the cell. They undergo changes while they are within the describable cell-area. They return presently as other physico-chemical factors, to the environment. The cell dies if the continuous exchange is interrupted. Progressive changes depend utterly on the communion; retrogressive changes appear swiftly on its restriction.

From a relative position in time and space, the environment flows through the living cell, becoming of its very life in the process; and the cell flows and grows through the environment, establishing in this process its particular career-line as an organism. It is artificial, and abstraction, to say that the cell is one thing and the environment another. The two entities thus postulated refer to some unitary thing in which organism and environment are indissolubly bound—so long as life continues.

In the cell-medium complex one can observe much that is marvelous. There are factors of organization, including polarity and dynamic gradients, which establish an oral and an aboral end in the expanding cell mass, which gradually evolves the foetus, ready for birth.

Before there are any elaborate differentiations of tissue, however; before in fact there has been a single division of the fertile cell, there is organization in the cell-medium complex such that a vital balance is maintained in the more purely organismic part of the complex. True, a change in the maternal blood may prove too great for the successful maintenance of this balance, and the complex disintegrates, the ovum dies. Quite marked changes in the

medium, however, do not disturb the optimum conditions in the cell-medium complex, due to functional activity of the region to which we refer as the cell wall. This region performs the function for which the foetus will ultimately be provided with elaborate organizations of tissues; in fact, duplicate organizations of whole systems.

Biologically, then, an organism is a self-perpetuating organization of the physico-chemical world which manifests life by functional activity in the complex. It is easy to think that the organism is an entity that can be removed from the complex, and some color is given this erroneous view by virtue of the storage capacity that is part of the vital organization.

The process of birth would seem to a naive observer to cut off the infant from the maternal—placental—medium and project him into the medium of the outer world. The communion with the physico-chemical environment has in fact to be maintained with but a short-term interruption—during which the oxygen and other necessary substances stored in the foetus are all that prevents death. Breathing must begin promptly. It is essential also that coverings be supplied to prevent loss of heat. Nursing cannot long be delayed.

The infant is born in far too immature a state to live by its own functional activity, unaided by interventions from others. This is quite different from the guinea pig, which has been described as born in its old age. It reflects a fundamental factor that makes civilization possible—the long stretch of post-natal life required by the human young for the attainment of independent competence to live. As growth and maturation proceed acculturation is inevitable, because in the earliest stages, the infant is cared for by people, and modified by this personal element in the environment. The course of existence from fecundation of the ovum may be said to be: parasitic, new born (animal), then infantile (human). The change from new born to infantile is less dramatic than its predecessor, but it is a very great change indeed; and also entails a change of medium implying a change of functional activity in a complex of changing organization.

Almost from birth, the infant begins to attend to movements and objects about him. Several of Peterson's infants looked at him and followed his movements with their eyes as early as the seventh day after birth. There is no room for doubt as to the significance attached to the object which satisfies hunger and thirst of the infant, and we may safely infer that the *mothering one* is the first vivid perception of a person relatively independent of the infant's own vague entity.

I surmise that a part of her, the nipple, provides the first of all vividly

meaningful symbols—a vaguely demarcated “complex-image” or protoconcept with very wide reference. The clarification of the nipple as borne by another person instead of its being a relatively unmanageable part of one’s own cosmic entity is the first step in shrinking to life size. Outer objects of a more neutral sort—that do not satisfy physico-chemical needs directly—come gradually to mark off the limits of one’s private world, and so to establish the reality of the relatively manageable as against the wholly independent.

We learn in infancy that objects which our distance receptors, our eyes and ears for example, encounter, are of a quite different order of relationship from things which our tactile or our gustatory receptors encounter. That which one has in one’s mouth so that one can taste it, while it may be regurgitated to the distress of everyone, is still in a very different relationship than is the full moon which one encounters through one’s eye but can in no sense manage.

This difference of relationship to objects is an important category for organizing one’s knowledge about the world. We organize our acquaintance with the world in order to maintain necessary or pleasant functional activity within the world with which, whether the objects be manageable or unmanageable, remote or immediate, one has to maintain communal existence—however unwittingly.

. . . [In infancy and childhood, there is a functional interaction between the child and] the significant other person, the mother, as a source of satisfaction, as an agency of acculturation, and finally as a source of anxiety and insecurity in the development of social habits which is the basis of development of the self system. Let us now attend, particularly, to the mediate channels of acculturation, in particular the products of the printer’s art.

In this culture all children fairly early encounter pictures. Many of them have picture books, as they are called. Picture books often have a little printed matter in them, and gradually the child learns to read. Remembering . . . the autistic, the highly personal meaning of everything to the young child, we can best illustrate the process of consensual validation by referring to what goes on when, for example, the young child learns that a certain colored or black and white pattern in a book is “kitty,” although, of course, there is also “kitty” who runs around and occasionally scratches one.

I am sure no child who can learn has not noticed an enormous discrepancy between this immobile representation in the book which, perhaps, resembles one of the momentary states that kitty has been in on some occasion. I am certain that every child knows that there is something very strange in this



printed representation being so closely connected with the same word that seems to cover adequately the troublesome, amusing, and very active pet. Yet, because of unnumbered, sometimes subtle, sometimes crude experiences with the carrier of culture, the parent, the child finally comes to accept as valid and useful a reference to the picture as "kitty" and to the creature as "kitty."

The child thus learns some of the more complicated implications of a symbol in contradistinction to the actuality to which the symbol refers, which is its referent; in other words, the distinction between the symbol and that which is symbolized. This occurs, however, before verbal formulation is possible.

From the picture book and the spoken word in this culture one progresses to the printed word and finally discovers that the combination of signs, *c-a-t*, includes "kitty" in some miraculous fashion, and that it always works. There is nothing like consistent experience to impress one with the validity of an idea. So one comes to a point where printed words, with or without consensually valid meaning, come to be very important in one's growth of acquaintance with the world.

There was first the visually and otherwise impressive pet, which was called "kitty" (an associated vocalization); then came the picture of the kitten; now comes the generic *c-a-t* which includes kitty, picture of kitten, a kitten doll, and the alley cats seen from the windows. And all this is learnt so easily that—since no one troubles to point it out—there is no lucid understanding of the sundry types of reality and reference that are being experienced. Familiarity breeds indifference, in this case. The possibilities for confusion in handling the various kinds of symbols, naturally, remain quite considerable.

Let me now suggest something of the wide spread of significance in speech as speech, rather than as spoken words and sentences. Some of you may recall from childhood the experience of first encountering a person whose dialect was not the accustomed one. Or, perhaps, you may recall the first hearing of a conversation in a foreign tongue.

If some such experience is recaptured, let us compare it with the general experience of children with strangers. When the stranger speaks in the accustomed dialect—quite aside from the extensive significance of other non-verbal factors in everyone's speech—the insecurity felt by the child is diminished. The familiar diaphonic progressions convey some reassurance as to the *naturalness* of the stranger. He is not some awesome creature from the autistic world blended out of dreams and longings and tales of wonder that one has been told.

This unity in one's dialect-group, which presently spreads to include one's language-group, is by no means restricted to the era of childhood. Many Americans who go to Europe and move among peoples in the use of whose tongue they are not competent, show the same factor in the attitudes that they manifest. The people whom they encounter are not invested with as complete a set of human traits as are even the more obnoxious of our acquaintances at home. These foreigners are not quite human. One feels emancipated correspondingly from some or many of the restraints that govern one in life at home. One does odd things—sometimes durably regrettable things—that have never occurred to one before. There is an attenuation of our conventional inhibition because we do not recognize these strangers as fully human and do not accord them the same critical attitudes towards us that we have accustomed ourselves to live with.

The solidarity-creating power of a common tongue is most important. This factor comes gradually to manifest itself, also, in the matter of the printed word.

That which is printed is ordinarily directed to a larger and less specific audience than is the spoken word.<sup>1</sup> It almost necessarily conveys some feeling of impersonality, of larger than tête-à-tête situations. Correspondingly, it usually tends to expand one's feeling of acquaintance with the world—the world of behavior, of opinion, of geographical facts. This function of the printed page is what I meant by mediate acculturation: the accession of cultural factors not directly from a significant person who manifests them, but through the instrumentality of narrative and reading.

We come now to the juvenile era, in which the use of this mediate channel is very important. Childhood, for our purpose, is marked off from the juvenile era by the appearance of an urgent need for compeers with whom to have one's existence. By "compeers" I mean people who are on our level, and have generically similar attitudes toward authoritative figures, activities, and the like. This marks the beginning of the juvenile era, the great developments in which are the talents for cooperation, competition and compromise.

But before we have done with the developmental epoch of childhood, let me recall to you the biological fact of communal existence. If one scrutinizes the performances of any child, it will be evident that the child as a creature is existing in communal existence in or with an environment now impor-

<sup>1</sup> The written expression of any language must be recognized to be more or less a *different* language than is the same tongue, used in vocal speech. The "inner speech" of more elaborated revery processes is still a different language. The degrees of difference of these three categories of verbal symbol operations varies from person to person. . . .

tantly cultural in its composition. The cultural entities, so to speak, are part of the necessary environment. The human being requires the world of culture, cannot live *and be human* except in communal existence with it. The world of culture is, however, clearly manifest only in human behavior and thought. Other people are, therefore, an indispensable part of the environment of the human organism. This is absolutely true in the earlier phases of personality development. The factor of fantasy may cloud this issue in later stages, as in fact, it may be observed to do at the end of the epoch of childhood in the case of isolated children.

The era of childhood ends with the maturation of a need for compeers. The child manifests a shift from contentment in an environment of authoritarian adults and the more or less personalized pets, toys and other objects, towards an environment of persons significantly *like* him. If playmates are available, his integrations with them show new meaningfulness. If there are no playmates, the child's revery processes create imaginary playmates. In brief, the child proceeds into the *juvenile era* of personality development by virtue of a new tendency towards cooperation, to doing things in accommodation to the personality of others. Along with this budding ability to play with other children, there goes a learning of those performances which we call competition and compromise.

In the juvenile era, in this culture, school is the great new arena for experience. If one's parents have been reasonably wise, one is somewhat prepared for what one encounters. If that was not the case, one is apt to have a very hard time, for one's compeers are not yet come to possess sympathy and forbearance. Quite the contrary, they are having enough problems of their own, enough new thwartings and humiliations, to be very unpleasant to the luckless juvenile who has recourse to inappropriate magic from childhood—tears, tantrums, telling mamma, or the like.

School brings new experience in adjusting oneself to authority. We may assume that one has evolved techniques for handling one's parents with only a modicum of pain. Now come other adults who have to be managed. One discovers quite suddenly that parents are by no means the worst people in the world; that parents, whatever their faults, take one rather more seriously than do teachers and older boys and girls. One finds that tried and trusted symbol operations—speech, gesture, excuses, promises—are no longer effective. Autistic fringes begin to stand out as barriers to communication. Mediate and immediate acculturation proceed apace. The world begins to spread, the horizons move off. One begins to see that there is a great deal which one had not previously suspected.

The interpersonal factors between teacher and the pupil in this school situation may work good or may work evil effects on the growth of personality. Where, for example, there has been an eccentric parent, let us say for example a person of extreme puritanical rigidity, a teacher may give the first clue to the child that this is not the ubiquitous attitude of people, of important people, to life. The child, at first—because novel experience is very difficult to get within the focus of the self—may feel that the teacher is some queer kind of dangerous inferior creature, the sort of person with whom one's parents would not associate. Still gradually, gradually, because other children who are now important put up with this, take it for granted, seem to think that it is perfectly natural; because of this powerful support or validation of the novelty, the self may expand somewhat. This is always a difficult achievement; but the self may come as it were to doubt certain of the harsh puritanical restrictions which have been incorporated in it, and while perhaps they do not disappear and in times of stress throughout life may manifest themselves clearly, still the experience of the school may head the self dynamism in another direction which will make for much greater opportunity for contented living, for mental health.

On the other hand, harsh, cruel teachers—and there are certain people teaching school who enjoy the discomfiture of their charges—may affect the child from a happy home who has been taught to expect friendliness and a receptive and inquiring attitude, may teach him gradually by reiterated pain and humiliation, that the world into which he has moved is an unfriendly and cruel world, and may start revery processes in him the goal of which is to return to the home from which he has unhappily been expelled, apparently for no reason other than that he had gotten older. In this, a very considerable evil has been done because the character of these reveries is regressive. They seek to go back, and this child may indicate this regressive, retreating-into-the-past tendency by regretting that he has grown older, by wishing that he was younger again.

This regressive tendency is a great evil because development still has a very long way to go. If at the very beginning of the more specialized socialization of personality which the juvenile era, according to its limits, initiates, there is this strong reverse, this powerful rebuff, this cutting off of satisfactions or undermining of security, in the mind's eye the child turns backward, he seeks to avoid the future, to escape experience which would teach him how to live with one's fellows. This example may suffice to emphasize the effect on the growth of personality of the interpersonal factors which exist between teacher and pupil. Even as this is true, it is also true that barring



extraordinary situations—all too frequent before school entry—the effect is neither very bad nor very good. By and large it is useful.

Besides contacts with the school personnel there is the playground situation with other children, the bully, and so on, perhaps with a supervisor of playgrounds, a useful addition in many situations. Also, there is another side of the school situation; namely, the reaction of the home to the rumors of what goes on in school. This, too, can work good and evil. And then there is the attitude of the home toward the compeers, these others who have now become so significant in the development of personality.

With this briefest of indications I shall leave this prolonged and tremendously important era and go on to the next era of personality development.

Around the age of eight and one-half, nine and one-half to twelve, in this culture, there comes what I once called the quiet miracle of preadolescence. Quiet because there is nothing dramatic or exciting about its appearance; there is no sudden change by which one has ceased to be juvenile and has become a preadolescent. In fact, everything is rather gradual, flows out of the past through the present into the future in personality performance, however dramatic somebody else's story of it may sound. I say "miracle" of preadolescence because now for the first time from birth, we might say even from conception, there is a movement from what we might, after traditional usage, call egocentricity, toward a fully social state.

Up to this time there have been *no* instances in which some other person approximated to the subject person, the child, the juvenile, the affectional significance which the child or juvenile had for himself. Those of you who have children know your children love you, know how thoughtful they are of you, how very foresightful they are for your comfort and happiness. The student of personality who has nothing at stake but observed phenomena is, however, unable to listen with complete conviction to your accounts. He will, instead, wonder as to what particular devices, training or conditioning you have used to bring about this to you so satisfactory state. If he can get near enough to the child or the juvenile to hear what the child or juvenile can say of the situation with you, it will sound much less sentimentally perfect. It will suggest a realistic appreciation of a necessity and a human development of devices to meet the necessity. There will not be this sentimental glow of love, consideration, and so on, but rather that marvelous human thing, great adaptive possibilities applied successfully to a situation.

I suggest thus the egocentric character of personality up to the epoch of preadolescence. Adjustments made? Yes. Very subtle adjustments made? Yes. Great satisfactions to people who are interested in the child as a human?

Yes. Great successes in school, great respect from the teacher, adoration of the teacher—all sorts of things which, on careful study, seem, however, to leave the child or the juvenile as the center of his processes, the thing that matters above everything to him.

This is exceedingly fortunate. The human race would have expired long centuries ago were it not so. A most thoughtful, considerate parent who would change this and who would bring about the miracle to which I am about to refer before its time would cripple his offspring, at least to the second generation. There are the most excellent reasons why true social orientation takes a long time coming. But it comes in preadolescence. The capacity to love in its initial form makes appearance as the mark that one has ceased to be juvenile and has become preadolescent. What this means in the outline of situations which it brings about is this: at this point the satisfactions and the security which are being experienced by someone else, some particular other person, begin to be as significant to the person as are his own satisfactions and security.

You have just heard a definition of the end state of love, which if you are not accustomed to this type of thinking, may seem to you a strange one. Let me repeat it because it has certain objective validity which many other definitions might be found to lack. When the satisfaction or the security of another person becomes as significant to one as is one's own satisfaction or security, then the state of love exists. So far as I know, under no other circumstances is a state of love present, regardless of the popular usage of the word.

This state of affectional rapport—generically love—ordinarily occurs under restricted circumstances. In the beginning many factors must be present. Some of these may be called obvious likeness, parallel impulse, parallel physical development. These make for situations in which boys feel at ease with boys rather than with girls. This feeling of species identity or identification influences the feeling involved in the preadolescent change. The appearance of the capacity to love ordinarily first involves a member of one's own sex. The boy finds a chum who is a boy, the girl finds a chum who is a girl. When this has happened, there follows in its wake a great increase in the consensual validation of symbols, of symbol operations, and of information, data about life and the world.

This comes about as a fairly obvious consequence of the fact that the other fellow has now become highly significant to one. Whereas previously, one may have learned to say the right thing to one's companions, to do the right things, now these sayings and doings take on a very special significance. One's security is not imperilled by one's love object. One's satisfactions are

facilitated by the love object. Therefore, naturally, for the first time one can begin to express oneself freely. If another person matters as much to you as do you yourself, it is quite possible to talk to this person as you have never talked to anyone before. The freedom which comes from this expanding of one's world of satisfaction and security to include two people linked together by love, permits exchanges of nuances of meaning, permits investigations without fear of rebuff or humiliation, which greatly augments the consensual validation of all sorts of things, all in the end symbols that stand for—refer to, represent—states of being in the world.

In this period there begins the illumination of a real world community. As soon as one finds that all this vast autistic and somewhat validated structure to which one refers as one's mind, one's thoughts, one's personality, is really open to some comparing of notes, to some checking and counter-checking, one begins to feel human in a sense in which one has not previously felt human. One becomes more fully human in that one begins to appreciate the common humanity of people—there comes a new sympathy for the other fellow, whether he be present to the senses or mediated by rumors in the geography, or the like. In other words, the feeling of humanity is one of the aspects of the expansion of personality which comes in preadolescence. Learning at this stage begins to assume its true aspect of implementing the person in securing satisfactions and maintaining his security in interpersonal relations through the rest of life.

Previous to this time many people have learned for fun. Those were the bright pupils who very often satisfy the teacher perfectly, and the year after haven't the ghost of an idea of what the deuce it was all about. Or learning has been difficult, for rewards and punishments. It is only when the world expands as a tissue of persons and interpersonal relations which are meaningful that knowledge becomes truly significant, and learning becomes a serious attempt to implement oneself for one's future life.

It is true that some people arrive at preadolescence so crippled by "educational" experience that this particular phenomenon in regard to learning may appear erratically, rather than uniformly. There are instances in our educational system in which the utility of the knowledge, of the learning, is so distorted that a field of information is permanently barred to any ordinary development of the personality. You will find, for example, a good many people who tell you that they are no good at mathematics. Now, it is true that mathematical genius seems to have something to do with germinal constitution. It appears in some imbeciles as well as in some people who are definitely geniuses. It runs in certain stocks, certain families, perhaps; that is,

it is more abundant in them than in the population, generally. Germinal constitution is not, however, what is involved when a person tells you, "Oh, I am no good at mathematics." If you can establish a condition of sufficient confidence with this person and work back to the time when he encountered mathematics, usually in the teaching of arithmetic, you will learn that his security was grossly undermined in this process, that in some fashion or other he suffered so much pain, so much threat of anxiety, so much anxiety itself, that the whole field of intrinsically mathematical symbol operations has taken on a vague mark of anxiety. When he is confronted with a mathematical problem he experiences anxiety. He ordinarily avoids becoming involved in such problems, for this excellent reason.

When there is anxiety, it tends to exclude the situation that provoked it from awareness, and so the person made anxious by the mathematical problem tends to overlook certain commonplace, obvious aspects of the problem that are well within his grasp. The tendency is to move away from, rather than simply to grasp, the factors making up the situation presented to him.

The juvenile era often includes experience which damns certain fields of learning; the preadolescent expansion of consciousness and sympathy for a larger world of many relationships, many complexities and many people then tends to be blocked off from particular fields of knowledge. Otherwise one now begins to learn because knowledge is demonstrating its usefulness to oneself and one's friend.

One thus comes to an expansion of the necessary human environment that—with but one great interruption—goes on to the fullest development of the human organism. The interruption is the coming of genital sexuality. It may be well to review the path that we have been following, before we take up the era of adolescence, itself.

. . . [The] self comes into being as a dynamism to preserve the feeling of security. . . . [It] is built largely of personal symbolic elements learned in contact with other significant people. . . . [It] comes to control awareness, to restrict one's consciousness of what is going on in one's situation very largely by the instrumentality of anxiety with, as a result, a dissociation from personal awareness of those tendencies of the personality which are not included or incorporated in the approved structure of the self.

The point is that the self is approved by significant others, that any tendencies of the personality that are not so approved, that are in fact strongly disapproved, are dissociated from personal awareness.

. . . [These] dissociated tendencies, which do not cease to exist merely because they are excluded from the self, manifest themselves in actions, activities,



of which the person himself remains quite unaware. The actions are unnoticed and the goals of the activities are things of which the person has no conscious knowledge.

This dissociation of components of the personality is not restricted to the pursuit of satisfaction. Some of the power processes which the infant and the child, perhaps even the juvenile, found effective also come under such stern disapproval at a later stage of personality that they, too, are dissociated, and from then on manifest outside of the awareness of the person himself.

They were tolerated by the significant personal environment for a time, as shown, for example, by the attitude that the infant has no particular mind, and, therefore, is justified in being wholly irresponsible about certain things; but when he gets to be a child these activities are no longer satisfactory, and under certain circumstances at least he must dissociate some of the power operations, magic performances, of infancy from his consciousness of performance as a child.

It may be that anything which is useful at one stage of personality development will be dissociated in the next stage unless the culture-carrying adults encourage its continued elaboration within the self. The elaboration of some drives, like these drives to maintain security and to manifest personal power, personal capacity, capability, importance, have reasonable chance of being elaborated, at least in the case of people who grow up in rather hygienic homes. Certain other tendencies are not so fortunate and are quite certain to suffer dissociation from the personal consciousness.

We may say, however, as a generality, that healthy development of personality is inversely proportionate to the amount, to the number, of tendencies which have come to exist in dissociation. Put in another way, if there is nothing dissociated, then whether one be a genius or an imbecile, it is quite certain that he will be mentally healthy. The precise meaning of this term "mentally healthy" will gradually appear.

If, on the other hand, a person be very talented but be required by his experience, by the significant people who bear on him at various stages in his development, to dissociate from his awareness a considerable number of powerful and durable motivational systems, then that person will be markedly exposed to mental disorder. He will inevitably be maladjusted in some of the situations through which his life must develop, and that maladjustment, due to the partition in his activity, will come about quite certainly, the partition being between those activities of which he is aware versus those which he does with no awareness of it.

Inverting the entire proposition, one might say that the larger the pro-

portion of energy systems in a personality which act exterior to the awareness of the person, the greater the chances that he will meet some crisis in interpersonal relations in which he cannot act in the fashion which we call mental health.

The likelihood of an acute disturbance in some interpersonal relation is greatly increased by the presence of an important motivational system in dissociation.

We have . . . [to consider] the growing complexity of the human environment, which . . . [is] made up of not only the physico-chemical universe, which may be assumed to be present to all the living things, and the biological universe, plants and animals that are of some interest to us, but the personal and the cultural, the cultural manifesting itself through persons, but none the less being susceptible of abstract study, as is done by the cultural anthropologists. Culture in this sense we hold to include institutions like the government, the Department of the Interior, the church, the school, and so on; the forceful convictions as to right and wrong ways of living, the mores, as sociologists are wont to call them, the traditions of the family group, of the community, and the like, and the fashions which are in force at the particular time concerned.

These are the cultural entities which are highly significant in the human environment, and all of them have their being and their manifestation so far as any particular person is concerned in other people who are significant for one reason or another to him, originally the mother as the provider of all sorts of necessary protection and satisfaction; in childhood the parents and the home society, people who are frequently in the home and related by bonds of intimacy or hostility to the parent; in the juvenile era, the school, the school teacher and all that machinery, and to a certain extent one's play companions; and in preadolescence the chum and the people in whom the chum is interested.

. . . [This] personal environment is expanded by the mediate channels of communication, the telephone, the radio, and particularly the printed word.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> We might illustrate the power of the press by commenting on its unintended effect of determining the fashions of suicide from time to time. Fashion is used advisedly. As I recall, I have lived through three periods in which self-destruction by way of bichloride poisoning enjoyed typical vogue. Bichloride poisoning is a horrible way of terminating life. The newspapers, without mentioning this, report, some time or other, that some more or less notable person has died of bichloride of mercury poisoning, self-administered. Shortly afterwards there are little squibs here and there in the newspapers to the effect that this and that person has died by bichloride. The fashion is spreading.

The most dreadfully satirical element of this particular fashion in poisoning lies in the peculiar devilry of the drug. One is horribly ill. If one survives the first days of hellish agony, there comes a period of relative convalescence—during which all the patients I have seen were most repentant

We have considered the stage of personality development in which the other fellow, the chum, someone of the same sex and approximately the same age, becomes highly significant, and by this very fact acts as the final binding agency to connect the growing individual with the full force and control action of the cultural environment. One can follow certain autistic courses, certain individualized highly personal courses of development, giving lip service to the requirements of one social environment so long as nobody in that environment has more than instrumental meaning to one. One can for instance do homage to people who are afflicted with a sense of greatness without feeling any sympathy with what they regard as important. It pays; it gives something that is repaid with what one wants—satisfactions or security. But when somebody else begins to matter as much as I do, then what this other person values must receive some careful consideration from me. So it is in the preadolescent change that the great controlling power of the cultural, social, forces is finally inescapably written into the human personality.

We will presently discuss the phase of personal evolution which is the last step toward fully human estate, with respect for others as for oneself, with the dignity befitting the high achievement and with the freedom of personal initiative which is comfortably adapted to the circumstances which characterize the particular social order of which one is a part.

Before I can discuss the phase of adolescence it is necessary that I say something more about the impulses which underlie the pursuit of satisfaction and the protection or pursuit of the feeling of security. Many of you have doubtless noticed that thus far in a presentation which started with the statement that the study of individual personality did not seem to be within the field of science, the only thing that seems amenable to scientific approach being the actions in interpersonal situations; that which someone does with me, that can be observed, both by me and by some objective third person—what goes on in that person, the unique peculiarity of his personality, seems to escape any method of science—yet I have proceeded after this preamble . . . with such terms as tendency, impulse, goal, and so on, as if I had departed my own dogma and were discussing individual human personality as the subject of study.

---

and strongly desirous of living. Then comes the third phase, during which one suffers unimaginable agonies, again for days. Then with awful inevitability, one finally dies.

The ephemeral printed word of the news sheet influences the style of suicide after the pattern of fashion change, and the growth and the decay of a fashion of destroying oneself, the grossest of misdirections of living, literally can be traced to the accounts of a, for the moment, new method, and to the gradual ennui that comes from multitudinous reports of the same thing.

We have finally come to the point where this convenient, this false unitary individualistic language becomes highly confusing instead of definitely indicative. By that I mean this, that while I have tried thus far to indicate by the use of the conventional individualistic language some of the considerations relevant to psychiatry, I can no longer continue in that course without apology and without reemphasizing my original position, because one cannot even seem to make sense, from here on, in the individualistic language of common speech and of the traditional psychology.

We have to realize that when we talk about an impulse that underlies the pursuit of satisfaction we are using a figure of speech that comes very naturally to us, by which we must be referring to something quite different. Let me try to express the more valid content of this instance of individualistic speech more lucidly and more accurately.

When we speak of impulse to such and such action, of tendency to such and such behavior, of striving toward such and such goal, or use any of these words which sound as if you, a unit, have these things in you and as if they can be studied by and for themselves, we are talking, according to the structure of our language and the habits of common speech, about something which is observably manifested as action in a situation. The situation is not any old thing, it is you and someone else integrated in a particular fashion which can be converted in the alembic of speech into a statement that "A is striving toward so and so from B."

As soon as I say this, you realize that B is a very highly significant element in the situation. Many situations are integrated in which A wants deference from B, and B, *mirabile dictu*, wants deference from A. It looks as if there were something in A and something in B that happened to collide. But when one studies the situation in which A and B pursue, respectively, the aim of getting from the other person what he himself needs and what the other person needs, we find that it is not as simple as it looks. The *situation* is still the valid object of study, or rather that which we can observe; namely, the action which indicates the situation and the character of its integration.

The situation is integrated in such manner as to resolve itself after a change that is satisfactory or satisfaction giving, or tributary to security. This is the general statement of all interpersonal situations. They are integrated in such fashion that as processes—and you remember the living are always manifesting processes and you do not have static situations, nor static people—the situation is so integrated that what action there is in it can move to the discharge or resolution of some dynamic component in each of the people.

When that has happened, the situation is at least temporarily adjourned.



It has ceased to be more than a memory and a potentiality for similar situations to occur. Following, however, what we have said about the impulses that are accompanied by awareness and those that are dissociated from the awareness of the person, you will see that many situations may be integrated among or between people such that both a witting impulse, a known impulse, an understood and recognized impulse, and a dissociated impulse, are involved.

I should illustrate this, for example, by having a person integrate a situation with another person in order to get a promotion. Let us say that he is subjected to a rigid interrogatory, not only to determine his qualifications and the justification for his promotion, but also to humiliate him very cruelly.

What have we here? In the old language of common speech you would say, "Well, he has to deal with a cruel or a sadistic superior." The "has to" is open to question. Whence the compulsion which requires at this time that he should take steps to get a promotion? That might be anything. It *may* be that he has to.

Yet, let us study the superior instead of this person whom we have just discussed. Let us observe that someone else in his organization wishes to be promoted. He is interrogated, but he is interrogated carefully, so that his self-respect will not be wounded, so that he will not be humiliated or hurt.

Let us say that neither gets the promotion. There is nothing in either situation as I have described them, which implies favorable or unfavorable action. But there is a difference in these two situations which have in common an administrative person. How do we understand this? We may understand this by saying that the first person, the one who was hurt and humiliated, manifested toward his superior certain actions which called out the superior's hostility and destructiveness, that the second person in the integration with the administrator prohibited, in some fashion, the manifestation of these durable traits of the administrator.

In the first case we may safely assume that the underling did not wittingly, did not to his knowledge or with his conscious awareness, provoke the cruel impulses in the administrator. In the second case we may say that the underling did not consciously prohibit those impulses in the superior. But both situations were multiply determined. There was the acknowledged, the known, the consciously evidenced desire for progress, for improvement in one's life situation in both the applicants. There was in the first case a willingness to undergo pain, humiliation, and so on; in the second case there was some dangerous hostility which it was well to let sleep. This is a crude, perhaps not too convincing, illustration of a situation integrated by the con-

sciously accepted motives within awareness and other impulses more or less incongruent to them.

You will realize that it is very difficult for a person to feel secure and self-respecting if he knows that he carries in himself impulses which cause him to be humiliated or otherwise made to suffer by anybody in authority. And you will also, such of you as have any trace of this not too rare impulse, know that one seldom is clearly and unblushingly aware of the fact that he is rather dangerous when he is hurt. These things have been dissociated from the self in the process of development to the state, in our example, of our underlings before they apply to the superior.

Now let us consider preadolescence in connection with that type of self organization in which the predominating attitude toward others is hate. Such a state does not necessarily preclude a development to preadolescence. It may be a great handicap. It often leads to experience which does prevent development to preadolescence. But it does not always do so, and quite often people whose attitude toward others is almost uniformly derogatory, whose attitude toward the self is hostile, do get on to preadolescence, and in preadolescence undergo what I have called the quiet miracle of developing the capacity to love. Someone else begins to be as significant as oneself.

What do we see in these situations? What do we see of the no longer acceptable hateful attitude in so far as it pertains to the love object? We see the evidences of recent dissociation; in the midst of rather effective *toward* performances there will come some untoward acts of hostility to the person newly elevated to an equality of importance with oneself.

These acts are ordinary mysteries. They mystify the person who manifests them, despite the fact that such acts were about all that he manifested until, say, two months ago. Now it comes to him as shocking, he cannot understand why he does it. It has been dropped out of the realm of awareness, but it has been dropped so recently and after such a great body of experience that dissociation is not complete. It is in the anteroom, you might say, on the way out. One can remember that it is not as novel as it seems, and, therefore, one may well develop a plausible perplexity about it.<sup>3</sup>

We touch here on a situation that is clearly in the realm of personal problems, of mental disorder in contradistinction to the progression which we call mental health. Preadolescence to a considerable degree and adolescence

<sup>3</sup> *Rationalizing* is the technical word for this misuse of reasoning which, in some people, amounts to their major nuisance value in society. All the things they do that don't happen to receive just the right response from the other fellow are "explained," and they are always explained plausibly, although few indeed of us know why we make particular social mistakes. If I were asked at a moment of weariness, "What is the outstanding characteristic of the human being?", I believe I would say, "His plausibility."

to a high degree, are the epochs in which warp of development in earlier stages manifests itself as severe handicap. . . .

Preadolescence is usually spent in school and at home. Parents are still people of significance, but their merits and demerits have been fairly well appraised. This does not mean that from henceforth they are to be accorded a simple, realistic status. Quite the contrary; the adolescent upheaval which is impending will bring with it a revaluation of everyone, parents included. The preadolescent frames of reference are, at least in our culture, about the clearest and most workable ones that we have. They do not include lust as a complicating and distorting factor—generally, a confusing and misleading element. Love is new and uncomplicated. The parental complex is viewed from this new angle and, while there may still be aspects which do not make sense, the appraisal is often more valid than is the view which will be adopted some five or six years hence.

The relatively uncomplicated experience of love is entirely ennobling. Sympathy flows from it. Tolerance as a respect for people—not as an intellectual detachment from prejudice—follows it like a bright shadow. Authoritarian figures in the home and elsewhere are recast as of good intention, however stupid and uninformed.

A remedy has at last been found for many thwartings and humiliations, for sundry prohibitions. One looks about one at one's compeers, without sentimentality but with a feeling that they have come naturally by their assets and deficiencies.

A new form of participation develops, in part from sympathy and understanding, in part from awe at the newly expanded world. The preadolescent evolves the practice of *collaboration*, a valid functional activity as a person in a personal situation. This is a great step forward from cooperation—I play according to the rules of the game, to preserve *my* prestige and feeling of superiority and merit. When we collaborate, it is a matter of *we*. The achievement is no longer a personal success; it is a group performance—no more the leader's than the led.

In this brief phase of preadolescence, the world as known gains depth of meaning from the new appraisal of the people who compose it. The world as rumored is a wonderful place; the quest of Sir Lancelot rises from the mists of faëry to all but a pattern of life to be lived. Experiences reported from excursions away from home carry a coloring of friendly wonder. The future is constructed in relatively noble terms by the reveries that prepare for tomorrow and that assuage disappointment, take the humdrum out of monotonous tasks.

The imaginary people of preadolescent fantasy may seem to us insubstantial; the imaginary play of the preadolescent may seem but old, romantic folklore crudely adjusted to the spirit of the times. The illusions that transmute his companions—if they be illusions—may seem to us but certain of an early end, a disillusionment. But whatever his people, real, illusory or frankly imagined, may be; they are not mean. Whatever his daydreams with his chum, whatever his private fantasies, they are not base. And as to his valuations of others; here we may take pause and reflect that it may be we who see “as through a glass, darkly.”

These young folk are grossly inexperienced. They are often grossly misinformed as to the motives that are prominent in adult life around them. But I surmise that after the measure of their experiences they see remarkably clearly. Also, I believe that for a great majority of our people, preadolescence is the nearest that they come to untroubled human life—that from then on the stresses of life distort them to inferior caricatures of what they might have been.



## JOHN DOLLARD AND NEAL MILLER

MODERN psychological investigation, in the words of one of its contemporary practitioners (L. L. Thurstone), shares "the faith of all science that an unlimited number of phenomena can be comprehended in terms of a limited number of concepts or ideal constructs. Without this faith, no science could ever have any motivation. To deny this faith is to affirm the primary chaos in nature and the consequent futility of scientific effort." In its continuing theoretical attempt to assimilate the multitude of mental phenomena to a finite and systematic set of explanatory laws, experimentally based and publicly testable, psychology has received its chief stimulus from the work of two men, Sigmund Freud and Ivan P. Pavlov (1849-1936). Both of these men were experimentally oriented, and each shared the belief that human behavior could be approached naturalistically, and that, in the sense of being susceptible to scientific description and analysis, there exists no abrupt discontinuity between human and animal behavior. Indeed, it was one of Freud's great contributions to show that even such seemingly random sorts of behavior as verbal lapses and casual forgetting were by no means accidental, and that even dreams could be understood and explained as instances of general behavioral laws. But in spite of this basic agreement at its sources, a widening disagreement as to the methods to be employed in psychological inquiry has tended to create two quite different schools of thought. The followers of Pavlov have sought to follow a general behavioristic program, based on the tenet that reputable investigation must confine itself to observable facts, and hence to bodily responses to external stimuli, and that all behavior can, in principle, be explained in terms of the conditioning of organisms through such stimulus-response patterns. Accordingly, many behaviorists have been led to condemn psychoanalysis as "unscientific," on the grounds that it postulates phenomena which are, in the very nature of things, unobservable, namely *unconscious* phenomena; and that, if unconscious phenomena exist at all, they cannot be experimentally determined in the public manner which science seems to demand. Freud, who was himself a cautious experimentalist, confessed to a feeling of "discomfort" when he published, at the age of forty, his first psychoanalytic case studies. Nonetheless, he found that "we cannot dispense with the unconscious part of the mind in psycho-analysis"; and that the therapist must therefore rely on techniques other than those approved of by the behaviorists. Especially is introspection required in correlating symbols with experiences in the patient's life, for "the analyst does not know what the experiences have been, he has to wait until the patient remembers them and tells them." The behaviorist, on the other hand, regards such testimony as unreliable, for in reflecting on our own experience we inevitably rationalize and distort, and at any rate the lines of inquiry depend too heavily on the intuitive talents of the therapist. They claim that experience indicates that systematic observation of animals and infants, utilizing physiological and biological hypotheses, has led to dependable

and predictable generalization. Yet, while there is no denying the scientific elegance of the behaviorists, there is no gainsaying the impressive therapeutic possibilities of psychoanalysis nor the suggestiveness of its conceptual scheme. A number of thinkers have wondered whether there is any basic theoretical incompatibility between the two schools, for at least some psychoanalytic propositions have received rather widespread confirmation, and Freud even envisioned the time when psychological constructs would give way to physiological or biochemical ones. Though such a program is not likely to be effected in the near future, literally hundreds of contributions toward it have been made, and "experimental psychoanalysis" is today a vigorous and expanding area of investigation.

Outstanding in this field is the work of John Dollard (b. 1900) and Neal Miller (b. 1909). In their collaborative work, they have set themselves the goal of "formulating in behavior theory and culture concepts what is done by the therapist and patient." Drawing on the rich sources of psychoanalytic case studies, seeking in their methods a "natural-science exactness," they have sought to illuminate, if not to explain, the mechanisms of human learning and the social conditioning of learning patterns. In relying thus on a number of broad fields of scientific discipline, they exemplify the cooperation and integration, the congeniality to new ideas as well as the demands of rigorous statement, which are essential to the scientific spirit and crucial to man's self-understanding.

Dollard is a graduate of the University of Chicago, where he received his Ph.D. in 1931. He has held a number of research posts, especially with the Institute of Human Relations at Yale University. His published works include *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* (1937); *Victory over Fear* (1942); *Fear in Battle* (1943); and *Criteria for the Life History* (1953). Miller is a graduate of Yale. He received his Ph.D. there in 1935 and is now a professor in the Institute of Human Relations. He has published a number of works in his own right, and with Dollard he has published *Frustration and Aggression* (1939); *Social Learning and Imitation* (1941); and *Personality and Psychotherapy* (1950), from which the following selection has been taken.



## PERSONALITY AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

### CHAPTER X: SOCIAL CONDITIONS FOR THE LEARNING OF UNCONSCIOUS CONFLICT

An intense emotional conflict is the necessary basis for neurotic behavior. The conflict must further be unconscious. As a usual thing, such conflicts are created only in childhood. How can it be that neurotic conflicts are engendered when there is no deliberate plan to do so? Society must force children

---

This selection has been reprinted by permission from *Personality and Psychotherapy* by John Dollard and Neal E. Miller. Copyright, 1950, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, pp. 127-156.

to grow up, but it does not idealize neurosis and makes no formal provision in its system of training for the production of neurotic children. Indeed we deplore the neurotic and recognize him as a burden to himself and to others. How then does it happen? Our answer is that neurotic conflicts are taught by parents and learned by children. We will examine the circumstance under which this strange result occurs.

*Discovery of childhood.* A first answer to the puzzle is that until recently the relationship between childhood conditions of learning and adult neurotic behavior has not been understood. Freud first called attention to this possibility. He avowed that society could and did create serious emotional conflicts in some of its children and that these conflicts were the basis of later neurotic behavior. He noted that a serious conflict in the young child (infantile neurosis) usually precedes later neurotic behavior in the adult. . . .

*Patterns of child training confused.* Culture, according to Freud, is not a logical structure designed with experimental nicety. Rather, it is a loose historical system with many strains and conflicts. Some of the elements of current child-training procedures are undoubtedly thousands of years old. They represent a long history of conflict and confusion, of survivals from older times and unassimilated increments of the present. For example, modern society attempts to make children meek and obedient in the family but strong and competitive outside. Sometimes training in docility is so strong that the child is never able to hold its own later in the world outside the family. In other cases, rebellious traits are strongly developed and barely restrained within family life but are later freely generalized to the adult milieu. The problem of getting meekness exactly where it is wanted and strength displayed where it is appropriate is not an easy one, and it is not surprising that children frequently fail to make the correct discriminations.

A strain toward consistency in the culture patterns of child rearing there may indeed be, but these patterns are as yet far from a coherent structure. Not only are the advised methods of child training confused and changing in a "fadistic" manner, but the characters of the parents who apply these rules are variously corrupted and ineffectual. Occasionally the parents themselves may be infantile, selfish, lazy, obsessed, or timid. In one way and another, they compete with their children, overtrain them, underlove them, or fail to make the vigorous demands required to force children up the inclined plane of culture. Out of confused instructions to parents, combined with the character faults of parents themselves, arise the situations in which children are put in severe conflict.

The problem of the socialization of children has been solved only in a very

rough and ready way. The laws of learning required to understand it are still but partly known. Hence it is difficult to arrange the conditions of learning correctly, and even if one granted the existence of a science of child rearing, it would still be necessary to get the correct rules into the habit systems of whole generations of parents.

*Inherent difficulty of the problem.* Granted that the human infant is the organism most amenable to social training, there is still the problem of converting this organism into a complex socialized being. . . . Many skills must be developed; innumerable complex restraints have to be imposed and internalized; difficult discriminations must be learned. In some cases, responses which have a considerable innate likelihood of occurrence must be reversed and habits opposed to the natural ones acquired. Even if scientists knew the rules, could arrange the conditions, and could indoctrinate the parents, they would face the problem of what kind of children to produce. Since the conditions of material and social life are constantly changing under the impact of science it is difficult to envision exactly the kind of child who will be best adapted to the world of 1975. . . .

*Idealization of childhood.* The idealization of childhood in the "myth of the happy child" has prevented candid discussion of the strains of family life and the frequent misery and conflict of children. Each turbulent family has supposed that the inward life of other families was more serene, and each conflicted individual accepts the myth of the happy child—but for someone else. Thanks much to Freud's work we all now seem ready to tell the truth at the same time and admit that growing up in a family is a strenuous affair.

*Weakness of conventional child research.* Most of the conventional research on childhood does not deal with these important matters, nor is it carried on in the home where emotional conflicts are first learned. The early researchers on childhood grasped at the measuring instruments at hand and measured whatever could be measured with these instruments. Emotional conflict could not be easily measured. Hence though the physical maturation of the child is quite well understood, its emotional growth has been studied hardly at all. The instruments for this purpose have yet to be fashioned. Furthermore, the study of the child in the convenient clinic has tended to obscure the effect of the home and parents on the child's learning. The result is that there is little formal knowledge about some of those aspects of child development which are most important.

*A hypothesis on early learning must be risked.* Confessing this inadequacy in our scientific data, we must yet make the best picture we can of the sources of emotional conflict in child life. On the basis of behavior theory we know



that the learning of childhood is likely to be important. On the basis of common sense, we know that many significant changes in behavior are forced upon the child during the first five or six years of life. On the basis of clinical studies and histories we get some firsthand (though retrospective) accounts of these conflict areas.

We have this consolation: If some such reconstruction as that attempted here is not made, adult life, as all know it, is unintelligible. We prefer to run the risk of being found wrong on many points, while yet giving a coherent and reasonable account of social and emotional development, to being utterly right on a few points while leaving out many important variables because they are not yet carefully described. Leaving out the critical variables leads to a nonsensical account—which can never be a merit of science.

*Helplessness exposes children to conflict.* Because of their physical, mental, and emotional helplessness, children are particularly vulnerable to harsh or confusing patterns of training. They have few skills at evading the effects of unfavorable circumstances. On the physical side, the child has progressed greatly by the age of 18 months . . . ; yet he is still much smaller and weaker and can be hauled around, picked up, or spanked by adult giants. The gap between child and adult is even greater in the mental and emotional spheres. Children cannot understand the world and cannot control their emotional reactions. Therefore young children can be subject to more extreme conditions than adults endure, except perhaps when adults are exposed to combat situations in time of war. In combat and in infancy the extremes of hunger, fear, helplessness, confusion, and timeless strain are reproduced. Only in childhood and in combat are the individual's own capacities to control his life so meager and ineffectual.

It is not surprising, then, that acute emotional conflicts occur in childhood. The infant has not learned to wait, not knowing the world's inescapable routines; to hope, and thus to assure itself that the good moment will return and that the evil occasion will pass; to reason and plan, and thus to escape present disorder by constructing the future in a controlled way. Rather, the child is urgently, hopelessly, planlessly impelled, living by moments in eternal pain and then suddenly finding itself bathed in endless bliss. The young child is necessarily disoriented, confused, deluded, and hallucinated—in short, has just those symptoms that we recognize as a psychosis in the adult. Infancy, indeed, may be viewed as a period of transitory psychosis. Savage drives within the infant impel to action. These drives are unmodified by hope or concept of time. The higher mental processes (the Ego) cannot do

their benign work of comforting, directing effort, and binding the world into a playful sequence. What is gone may never return. The present pain may never fade. These are the tumultuous circumstances in which severe unconscious mental conflicts can be created. Only when the child has been taught to speak and think at a rather high level can the impact of the raw, drastic character of these circumstances be reduced.

*Greatest indulgence when child most helpless.* Ideally, of course, young children should not be called upon to face severe conflicts until they have the mental means for doing so. They should have the greatest support from the parents during earliest weeks, months, and years. Strong drives should be kept at low level through constant attentiveness by those who care for the child. Tasks should be imposed, but in a graded series. The most important objective of training in this period is teaching the child to speak and think, for only with the aid of his language can he learn to wait, hope, reason, and plan.

But parents are far from resolved to keep the strongest drives at a low level of urgency or from knowing how to impose the burdens of civilized life in a reasonable way. The young child is often taught too fast. He is treated as a mental adult when he cannot understand the instructions which he is given. Adult powers to control emotions are assumed. Incompatible demands are made and impossible tasks set. He is expected to produce discriminations which he has not been taught. He is sometimes expected to learn a habit perfectly in one trial. Heavy sanctions are applied for mistakes and failures.

*Single drives can produce misery.* Not all the painful circumstances of life are produced by *conflicts* although some of the worst are. Disturbance tends to be greatest when two drives are pitted one against the other and the individual must bear the pain of both. However, any *one* drive can be raised to traumatic heights and the bearing of it at such heights can be a source of important consequences. In the nursing period the child can learn some good or bad habits and develop some benign or ominous expectations of the world depending on how its feeding is handled.

The culture, of course, takes a position—a traditional position—on the various needs of the child. It has a design for the feeding situation, for cleanliness training, for sex training, for the treatment of anger responses in the child; and as the society imposes its will through the acts of the parents, the child reacts in its blind emotional way. Each one of the above-mentioned

training situations can produce long-lasting effects on the character and habits of the individual and each is worth a brief discussion. We are by no means sure that these four are all of the dilemmas which can produce acute emotional conflicts, but we do know that each one of them has, in known cases, done so.

### 1. *The Feeding Situation: Conflicts and Attitudes*

Much important learning takes place in reference to the hunger drive and the strong responses it excites. During the nursing period the child cannot "comfort" itself. It cannot, so to say, tell itself "It won't be long now," or "Only twenty minutes 'til feeding time." The hunger of the child is an urgent, incessant, and timeless pressure which, obviously, produces the most intense activation. If the child is fed when hungry, it can learn that the one simple thing it can do to get results (*i.e.*, cry) can make a difference in what happens. Learning to cry as a signal for food is one small unit in its control of the world. Such a trait could be the basis of a later tendency to be "up and doing" when in trouble, of a belief that there is always a way out of a painful situation.

*Apathy and apprehensiveness.* If the child is not fed when it is crying, but is instead left to "cry itself out," it can, similarly, learn that there is nothing it can do at that time to change the painful circumstances. Such training may also lay the basis for the habit of apathy and not "trying something else" when in trouble. In a second case, when the drive is allowed to mount, the child can also learn that being a little bit hungry is followed by being very painfully hungry. When the child is then fed, only its most violent responses are reinforced. In this case the child can learn to fear being very hungry when it is only slightly hungry and to make the frightened response appropriate to severe hunger when only mild hunger exists. It is thus learning to "overreact," to be apprehensive of evil even when the circumstances of life seem calm. This learning occurs through the behavior mechanism of anticipation.

*Sociability and "love."* On the other hand, probably the feeding experience can be the occasion for the child to learn to like to be with others; that is, it can establish the basis of sociability. When the hungry infant is fed, some of the wonderful relaxation responses which it experiences can be conditioned to the stimuli of those persons who are caring for the child. Thereafter the mere appearance of the mother can produce a momentary feeling of well-being. The child will learn to stop crying at the sound of her footstep, the rustle of her dress, or the sound of the tap water which is warming its bottle.

These experiences have an intense emotional quality which is often attached thereafter to the word "mother" as the source of all beneficence.

Likewise, if the child is properly held, cared for, and played with, the blessed relaxing quality of these experiences also will attach to those who care for it. Since the mother or caretaker stands at the very head of the parade of persons who become "society" for the child, it is quite important that she evoke such benign and positive responses in the child.

*Lack of social feeling.* The reverse of all this can also take place if the child is stuffed when it is not hungry. If its food rewards are in various ways cut down and spoiled, it may not care much whether "the others" are there or not. It may tend to be "low in social feeling." If the child is actually punished for crying when it is hungry, as by being slapped, a true hunger-anxiety conflict will be created. Though this may be rare, it does undoubtedly happen, especially when the child is overactive as a result of gastric upset and so is able to provoke anger in the ill-disciplined parent.

*One origin of fear of being alone.* The child can learn another dangerous habit in this period. It can learn to fear being alone. Teaching a child to fear being alone is easy to do and is often done inadvertently. Let the child get very hungry when it is alone, let it cry and not be heard or attended to, but let the quantity of stimulation in its body from hunger and from crying continue to rise. When the child is finally fed, these very strong terminal responses are reinforced and can be attached to all the stimuli which were present during the period of its intense hunger. These responses can produce stimuli of driveline strength. Similarly responses which produce strong drives can be attached to the darkness, to the immobility of objects, to quietness, to absence of parental stimuli. Once the child has inadvertently learned to "fear" darkness and quietness and immobility, it will also learn to escape from the darkness into the light, from the quietness into noise, and from immobility into the presence of others.

This escape may be perceived by the parents as an additional nuisance when they are expecting their hours of relaxation; the child insists on being with them even though "there is nothing wrong with it." They may take punitive measures, forcing the child back into the dark or the quiet and creating a true conflict between fear of darkness and the newly learned fear of the irate parent. This must indeed be a very common conflict, since fear of quietness and darkness are not innate in children and yet are frequently seen.

If this fear persists into adult life, it can be an element in the character of a person who is compulsively driven to social contacts, who cannot tolerate



being alone. Compulsive sociability may also involve a sacrifice in creativeness, since in order to be creative the individual must be able to tolerate a certain amount of loneliness.

*Weaning.* In the case of weaning also, severe traumatic circumstances may arise. If the child is suddenly changed from one type of food or mode of feeding to another, it may go on a hunger strike which the parents obstinately oppose, saying "It will eat when it gets hungry enough." Indeed it will, but in the meantime it may have learned some of the fears or the apathy already listed. If parents punish the child for its refusal to eat the new food a genuine conflict is created which in turn will have its consequences. There seems hardly anything valuable that an infant can learn by punishment under such circumstances, and parents should take the greatest pains to avoid this.

*Colic and recurring hunger.* The child with colic is also a sore trial to itself and its parents. One of the simplest circumstances producing "colic" is that the infant has eaten too much and must regurgitate some of the food or the gases which its digestion produces. Once it has been laboriously walked or patted into parting with food or gas it may be hungry again. Unimaginative parents, not understanding that hunger has innocently recurred, will fail to feed the child. If the mother does feed it, the child may overeat again and the cycle of gastric tension, vomiting, and hunger may recur. However, until an infant learns to make its gastric distress anticipatory and thus to check itself while eating, there is no way of avoiding these circumstances. The sequence overeating, gastric distress, vomiting, and recurring hunger seems more likely to occur with children fed on schedule since they will get much hungrier while waiting for the scheduled moment of feeding and are more likely to overeat.

If parents lose their tempers and punish the young child at any phase of this awkward kind of learning to eat just the right amount, severe conflict concerning feeding may ensue. If the infant is punished before it is burped, the result may be that it has anxiety attached to burping and regurgitating, and it is thus condemned to bear gastric tension. If it is punished after regurgitating when it is again hungry, anxiety responses will be attached to hunger stimuli. Under these conditions punishment cannot teach the infant anything that will help it along its road of development. Nevertheless this unavoidable circumstance of colic is one to test the character of the most devoted parents.

The foregoing discussion is by no means a check list of all the things that a child can learn during the first year or so of life. For example, in learning

to crawl and walk the child is also learning to fear bumps. It learns not to poke its head under the table and then suddenly try to stand erect. It is learning a few words and common commands. Those interested in the somatic development of the child can consult Gesell. Various specialists in pediatrics such as Spock have described the behavior problems that are most frequent among young children in the home.

*Secret learning of early years.* What we have attempted to do here is to show that the seemingly innocuous feeding situation can be fraught with important emotional consequences. Outsiders who cannot know what is going on in a home may see no reason to suppose that the infant is learning anything at all. Yet observant insiders may see the child becoming apathetic, apprehensive, learning to fear the dark, on the one hand, or becoming loving, sociable, and confident, on the other. It is this secret learning of the early years which must be made the object of scientific research. We are firmly of the opinion that anything that can be sensed can be scaled and thus that apathy, sociability and fear can be scientifically treated if we but trouble to study the child in the home—where these habits are being learned.

*Early conflicts unlabeled, therefore unconscious.* The young child does not notice or label the experiences which it is having at this time. It cannot give a description of character traits acquired during the first year of life nor yet of its hardships, fears, or deep satisfactions. What was not verbalized at the time cannot well be reported later. An important piece of history is lost and cannot be elicited by questionnaire or interview. Nevertheless, the behavioral record survives. The responses learned occur and may indeed recur in analogous situations throughout life. They are elicited by unlabeled cues and are mutely interwoven into the fabric of conscious life. The fact that different children learn different things during this period undoubtedly accounts for some of the variability between children which is often attributed to innate factors.

## 2. Cleanliness Training Can Create Conflicts

If the child has come safely and trustfully through the early feeding and weaning experience it may learn for the first time in its cleanliness training that the culture patterns lying in wait for it have an ugly, compulsive aspect. No child may avoid this training. The demands of the training system are absolute and do not take account of individual differences in learning ability. The child must master cleanliness training or forfeit its place in the ranks of socially acceptable persons. Freud describes the culture's task as building

within the personality of the child the psychic dams of loathing and disgust for urine and feces and particularly for the latter. The attempt to construct these inward barriers immediately puts the child in a conflict situation.

Observation of children within the home indicates that children begin with the same naïve interest in their feces and urine that they have in the other parts and products of their bodies. Development of the ability to grasp and finger objects makes it possible for the young child to handle and play with fecal material. The morning will arrive in every nursery when the astonished parents will observe their beloved child smearing feces over his person, his hair, and his immediate environment with gurgling abandon. This may be the first occasion for sharp, punishing exhortations, for angry dousing, for the awakening of anxiety in connection with fecal materials. On pain of losing the parents' love and so exposing itself to the high drives and tensions which occur when they do not support it, and on further pain of immediate punishment, the child must learn to attach anxiety to all the cues produced by excretory materials—to their sight, smell, and touch. It must learn to deposit the feces and urine only in a prescribed and secret place and to clean its body. It must later learn to suppress unnecessary verbal reference to these matters, so that, except for joking references this subject matter is closed and excluded from social reference for life. . . .

*Learning without verbal aids.* The difficulties which produce conflict in this learning arise chiefly from the fact that the child must accomplish it in a period of life when it has to learn mainly without verbal aids, that is, by trial and error. Learning cleanliness control by trial and error is a slow and vexing business. The child must learn to wake up in order to go to the toilet, though sleep seems good. It must learn to stop its play even when social excitement is strong. It must learn to discriminate between the different rooms of the house—all this by crude trial and error. In this case, "trial" means urinating or defecating in an inappropriate place, and "error" means being punished for the act so that anxiety responses are attached to the cues of this place. In the trial-and-error situation this must be repeated for each inappropriate place—bed, living room, dining room, kitchen, "outside."

The function of this training is to attach anxiety responses to the defecation drive so that they win out over the immediate evulsion response. These anxiety responses also motivate and cue off the next responses in the series, such as calling to the parents, running to the bathroom, unbuttoning the clothes, and the like. When accomplished by trial-and-error means, this training necessarily takes considerable time, perhaps several years in all, in which child and parent are under severe pressure.

*Strong emotions aroused in cleanliness training.* Learning cleanliness is no mere behavioral routine. It arouses strong emotions—perhaps as strong as are ever evoked in the child again. Anger, defiance, stubbornness, and fear all appear in the course of such training. Fear may generalize to the toilet itself and excite avoidance responses in the very place where the child is expected to “go.” Unable to discriminate between the safe and the unsafe place, the child may try “not to defecate at all.” This behavior is perfectly automatic, but it may seem willful to the parents, and they may particularly resent the final loss of control after the protracted attempt to inhibit defecation. Once hit on, this response would be strongly reinforced and tend to become habitual since the drive reduction after prolonged withholding would be much more intense than after a normal period of withholding. When “losing control,” instead of deliberately relaxing, is strongly rewarded, the habit of “losing control” should become anticipatory and thus prolong the problem of cleanliness training. In other words, great strictness at early ages may block rather than advance the child in his cleanliness learning.

*Learning to escape from sight of parents.* The child may become, from the parents’ standpoint, furtive by the following means: When it is punished for a cleanliness error by the parent, anxiety is attached to the sights and sounds produced by that parent. In order to escape that anxiety the child may attempt to escape from the parental presence and attempt to keep to a minimum the amount of time it spends near the parent. This state of affairs has the disadvantage that the child is escaping from one of its natural teachers. It may learn to speak less well than it might because it simply does not remain near those people who could teach it to speak. Infliction of punishment may also arouse anger toward the inflicting agent. The child may attempt struggling with the parents, biting them, or slapping at them and, in turn, be punished for this behavior. Thus, an anger-anxiety conflict is learned.

*Excessive conformity and guilt.* Again, the child may get the impression that it is pursued by an all-seeing, punishing guardian and may try making as few responses as possible—and certainly not innovating any novel responses. Its conclusion on the basis of punishments received may be that unless a response is known to be correct it should not be risked. Thus may be laid the characterological basis of the excessively timid, conforming individual. Similarly, the child may not be able to discriminate between parental loathing for its excreta and loathing for the whole child himself. If the child learns to adopt these reactions, feelings of unworthiness, insignificance, and hopeless sinfulness will be created—feelings which sometimes so mysteriously reappear in the psychotic manifestations of guilt.



*Advantages of verbal aids.* From this discussion it will be clear that the trial-and-error method of early training, with its many punishments, has much more risk attached than training carried on at a time when the child can be verbally aided to hit on the right sequence of responses in a few early trials. Once the child has acquired the words "living room," "kitchen," "bed-room," and "outside," a single punishment trial, if properly conducted, can attach anxiety to all these cues at the same time and so spare the brutal repetition of punishment. If the child has already learned to call for help when it needs help, it can much more easily learn to call for aid when it needs to defecate. If it has learned to stop various activities at the word "stop," it is much easier to get it to check the evulsion response when this is occurring to its innate stimulus. If certain promises of the parents already have reward value attached to them, the child can be aided to make the right responses by being promised simple rewards. If the child already attaches anxiety to certain instructions of the parents, these instructions can have some of the same effect as repeated, direct punishments.

In this case also the reinforcement of the act of defecation itself will fix the correct series of responses into place. This will happen whether the course of the training has been stormy or smooth. However, in the case of the smooth, verbally aided learning there is much less danger of arousing furious anger or of creating maladaptive habits such as retention of feces and loss of control. Extremely strong anxiety reactions do not occur and feelings of excessive worthlessness are less likely. The end result is the same so far as mere cleanliness training is concerned. The difference lies in the fact that the later, verbally aided method of getting out the response has much less risk of violent side reactions and character distortions.

*Freud's Superego.* The foregoing analysis employs the thoughts and sentences of Freud reworked from the standpoint of behavior theory. The course of cleanliness training is unlabeled and unconscious. Any one of us may have been through a stormy period of this kind and yet have no recollection of it. The results may show themselves in our symptoms, our most deeply embedded "character" traits, in our dreams, in our intuitive presuppositions about life, but they will not show themselves in our verbal behavior. The record of this training will be found in no man's autobiography, and yet the fate of the man may be deeply influenced and colored by it.

The first broad strands of what Freud calls the Superego are laid down at this time. Anxiety reactions, never labeled, are attached to stimuli, also unlabeled. When these stimuli recur later the anxiety reactions automatically recur. The resulting effect Freud has called the "Superego" or unconscious

conscience. When unconscious guilt reactions are severe, the personality is suffused with terror. It is hard to say whether a morbid conscience is a worse enemy of life than a disease like cancer, but some comparison of this kind is required to emphasize the shock produced in the witness when he sees a psychotic person being tortured by such a conscience. Enough is known now to convince us that we should make the humble-seeming matter of cleanliness training the subject of serious research.

### 3. *Conflicts Produced by Early Sex Training*

Sex-anxiety conflicts seem frequently to be involved in neuroses arising in civilian life. The recurrent appearance of sex as a conflict element does not seem to be due to the fact that sex is the strongest of human drives. At their highest levels, pain, hunger, and fatigue certainly outrank it. Many strong secondary drives such as anxiety, ambition, and pride can also be stronger than sex. Sex seems to be so frequently implicated because it is the most severely attacked and inhibited of primary drives. Even though relatively weaker, sex can exert a strong pressure which produces great activation in the organism and great misery if blocked for long periods. In no other case is the individual required to wait so many years while patiently bearing the goading drive.

*Source of first sex conflict—the masturbation taboo.* Erection of the penis can be observed in male infants as a reflexive response to interrupted feeding or to urethral drive pressure. At the age of a year the child is able to grasp an object quite perfectly. The sensitivity of the genital and the ability toprehend make masturbation possible. It seems likely also that there is some kind of reward associated with masturbating. On the basis of his observations, Kinsey believes that small boys acquire the capacity for orgasm long before they become able to ejaculate; similarly an experiment by Sheffield, Wulff, and Backer (1950) demonstrates that sexual responses short of ejaculation can serve to reinforce learning in the albino rat. It is certainly a fact that, if unchecked, children do learn to masturbate and that they sometimes obstinately persist even when quite severe sanctions are applied.

The sight of a child masturbating evokes intense anxiety in the adults of our culture and they promptly apply sanctions, ranging from persistently removing or jerking the child's hands away from its genital to slapping and spanking it. The result is to set up in the child the same sex-anxiety conflict which the adults have. As in other cases, masturbatory conflicts established in the first years of life are invariably unconscious. A vague negative feeling, a tendency to withdraw, an unease is established at the act, sight, or thought

of masturbatory behavior. These conflicts differ for different individuals in many ways and for many reasons. Some individuals may be caught in the act more often than others; some may be punished more severely than others; some may have stronger innate sex drive than others. Some may have had more time to learn the habit before being caught and punished and may thus have a stronger appetite for this behavior than other persons. Some may, so to say, scare easier than others because they already have strong anxieties established in the cleanliness-training situation. Such anxieties generalize easily from urethral to the genital stimuli. Often both are called "nasty" and the cue produced by the common verbal response helps to mediate generalization of fear. In this case it is easy to train the individual out of the masturbatory habit, since the fear does not have to be learned but only generalized to the sex stimuli.

*Parents don't notice effects of taboo.* The imposition of a masturbation taboo can have important effects on the child's life. There may be immediate and direct changes in behavior of the kind to be described as a "bed phobia". . . . When behavior changes occur it seems quite surprising that parents do not notice them as results of conflict over masturbation. The fact that they do not so notice is, however, easily explained. Intimate as their contact is with the child they may yet be very poor observers of cause and effect. Most of the young child's emerging life is mysterious to parents anyway. They may further have particular avoidances against noticing matters and connections which arise in the sexual sphere. Likely, they believe themselves to have been sexless in childhood and can do no less than believe the same in respect to their children. Whether correctly evaluated by parents or not, the masturbatory taboo is the first of the important sex taboos, and it sets up a sex-anxiety conflict in each of us.

*Sex typing of personality.* The sexual development of the child cannot be understood without understanding the forceful training in sex typing which it receives. The unspecialized or less specialized human being, the infant, is identified as boy or girl and its relationship with others is defined in terms of sex type. Sex typing is a strictly conventional arrangement that varies from society to society. Our own society is strongly organized around sex specialization of personality. This begins with male and female names, clothes, play patterns, toys, and continues throughout life by defining specialized sex roles for man and woman. The ultimate love object of the child is defined as a member of the opposite sex. The nascent sexual reactions of the child are directed toward stimuli of the opposite sex. The child is led to expect eventual sex rewards from persons of the opposite sex.

*The taboo on homosexuality.* Training in sex typing has the indirect effect of imposing a vigorous taboo on homosexuality. Homosexual objects are not presented, are treated by neglect or, if need be, vigorously condemned. The errors children make while learning sex typing are the source of much amusement to adults. The little girl declares she is going "to marry mommie" when she grows up or the little boy states he will marry his admired older brother. Children are carefully corrected and trained into making the appropriate distinctions. Furthermore, it seems probable that parents, already sex-typed, help to develop this turning toward the opposite sex by themselves "favoring" the child of the opposite sex.

Students of sexual abnormalities have suspected that the failure to define sharply the sex type is a factor in producing perverse sex adjustment. Thus, if a boy child were ardently desired, the parents might fail to impose sharp feminine sex typing on the girl who actually arrived. Or, in the opposite case, a mother who prefers her son to remain her "baby" may make him effeminate when she should be emphasizing his masculine character. Such inversions of social sex typing cannot directly produce a sexual perversion since sex responses must be attached to same-sex cues before a perverse sex appetite can exist; but they might tend to confuse the child about what its socially expected sex goals were and thus contribute to deviation.

After sex typing has been imposed and well learned, the child is in about this net position: masturbation has been tabooed, and it cannot give itself sex rewards by this means; sex behavior between siblings has been suppressed; on the other hand, a new channel, though a long one, has apparently been opened through the fact of sex typing. The child is vaguely led to expect something rewarding in the general direction of the opposite sex. These two circumstances set up the situation of the Oedipus complex.

*How fear is attached to heterosexual approach responses.* The anxiety which adolescents, and often adults, show at the prospect of heterosexual contact must be explained. It does not arise by chance. It arises rather in the family situation which is the child's most important early learning situation. The first definition of sexual responses is learned in relation to parents and siblings and only later transferred to others. Freud calls this the Oedipus situation.

We will illustrate from the case of the boy child, where the matter seems to be clear, and rehearse and paraphrase the familiar facts discovered by Freud. The boy child turns to his mother in fact or thought in the hope of getting sex rewards when he can no longer get them by himself. He expects sex rewards partly by generalization of expectation of reward—that is, by



analogy to the many rewards the mother has already given him—and partly from the fact that by sex typing he has learned to expect sex rewards from a woman and his mother is the woman at hand. Doubtless some of the anxiety already learned in connection with masturbation generalizes to the sex impulse when it begins to show itself toward family women.

A new source of anxiety appears, however; that is, fear of the father. The five-year-old boy knows his father is the head of the house, the symbolic course of punishments and discipline. He also knows that his father is the husband of his mother and has some unique relationship to her. This rivalry of the father does not exist merely in the boy's mind. It is often made very concrete in the father's behavior. The father may complain that the little boy sleeps in the mother's bed when he is already "too old" for such behavior. The father may object to the fact that the child or children sop up so much of the mother's time and leave so little to him. The father may impose certain restrictions about entering the parents' room which leave the child with a mystery on his hands. Whenever the male child makes emotional demands on the mother, the father may become more critical of him in other and more general respects, saying that the boy talks too much, that he does not work enough, and so forth. If the boy reacts with fear toward his father as a rival, it is because the father, consciously or unconsciously, is acting in a way that seems fearsome and rivalrous. The child is usually unable to discriminate between opposition on ground of sexual leanings and that evoked by its other claims on the mother. The whole thing may be played out as a kind of dumb show. The heterosexual strivings of the boy toward the mother may be behaviorally real and active but not labeled in the boy's mind. On the other hand, the opposition of the father, though active and effective, may be oblique and unconscious.

Often the mother herself rejects the claims of the boy. She has anxiety at any overtly sexual responses from the child, stops fondling him, and may suddenly and inexplicably change from being loving and approving to being horrified, disgusted, and disapproving.

In this case there is less need for the father to be harsh and hostile. But if the mother does not reject and does not clearly show her separate loyalty and adherence to the father, a great burden is placed upon him to maintain his control of his wife. The mother, for example, may use the seeming need of the child as a way of escaping from her husband and from the sexual conflicts which she has in regard to him. She may favor and cozen the son while avoiding her husband, and unconsciously this may seem to the father like a

genuine kind of preferment. The father may then react by very actively arousing the boy's fears.

*Specific genital anxiety.* If the boy's motives are sexual, the increased threat from the father produces anxiety which is directly attached to the sexual motives and interpreted as a sexual threat. This is one way in which castration anxiety may become an important factor in the boy's life even though the father never threatens castration in so many words. The boy has learned that the punishment often fits the crime.

There are other and less ghostly sources of the castration threat. Very often it has been specifically associated with the masturbation taboo—*i.e.*, that if the boy plays with his penis, the penis will be cut off. The threat may appear in the fables of childhood which are told so eagerly. One of the authors as a six-year-old boy was permitted to participate in an after-dark session of older boys. They were telling the tale of how Bill Smith, a prominent citizen of the town, had come home and surprised his wife in bed with her lover. Smith thereupon pulled out a spring-bladed jackknife (demonstration of length and viciousness of same by boy telling the story) and proceeded to unman the lover. Such a story does not remain, however, as a mere "fable." It is taken to heart and has the effect of teaching straight-out castration fear to sex motives.

The castration idea may occur in still another way; that is, as an inference from the lack of penis in the girl. The parents do not explain the different nature of the girl's genital. The uninstructed boy may assume that the girl once had an external genital but has been deprived of it, perhaps as a punishment. There is no doubt that this inference is often made. The authors have repeatedly heard it in those in-family situations where children are first questioning their elders about sexual matters. It is further surprising in the history of adults how often the idea of bodily damage occurs in relation to sex "sins." Castration fear has been shown clinically to be connected with fears of bodily damage, especially in the cases of heart and brain, to aversion to crippled people, and to avoidance of women in their genital aspect. Castration fear is frequently escaped by approaching the bachelor girl (who has no husband or father at her side) or by recourse to women of lower class or racial status (whose normal protectors are not allowed to function).

In any case, and engendered by whatever of these several means or combination of them, the sex conflict takes a new twist when it is worked out within the family. Anxiety which was once attached only to the masturbation impulse is now attached to the heterosexual approach situation. If this anxiety

is made very strong it can produce a certain relief in the intensity of the conflict. This is the so-called "resolution" of the Oedipus complex. When anxiety is greatly dominant over approach tendencies, the conflicted individual stays far from his goal and but few of the acquired elements in the sexual appetite are aroused. Thus, that part of the intensity of the conflict which is produced by appetitive sex reactions is missing, and the conflict is therefore lessened. However, this conflict should and does recur when the individual is placed near his goal object and cannot easily escape, as frequently happens in adolescence. Then again the full strength of the sex reactions is pitted against the terror of sexual injury. Marriage evidently seems to some adults a similar situation—that of being held close to a feared goal—and they make the blind escape responses which would be expected.

*Heterosexual conflict not labeled.* If the prior intimidation of the person has been very great, and if the mother's stand is correct, much less fear need be imposed by the father. If sex appetite is weak rather than strong, there is much less pressure from the child's side and less anxiety need be imposed to counteract it.

All these events are but poorly labeled at the time they occur. The culture is niggardly about giving names to sexual organs, sexual feelings, or the fears attached to them. The child is therefore not able to make a logical case for itself and, so to say, "put it up to the parents." Furthermore, repression sets in in two ways: Children are frequently forbidden to talk to others about their sexual reactions. Such sentences or thoughts as do occur tend to make the conflict keener both by arousing sex appetites and by cueing off the anxiety attached to them. The child is pained when it tries to think about sexual things and relieved when it stops. The result is repression. This repression has one unfortunate consequence for science. When the individual is later interviewed he is not able, promptly and freely, to give account of these matters. The renaming and mental reestablishment of these bygone events can thereafter only be made through the weary work of psycho-therapy.

Science is not the only loser. The individual himself has lost his opportunity to use higher mental activities in solving the conflicts involving sex and authority. There are many ways in which the person can be victimized. A sexual perversion may lurk behind the blank surface of repression. The individual may never again be able cheerfully and amiably to accept a measure of authority exerted over him. Acute anxiety may be attached to his heterosexual impulses and when the time comes that society expects, almost requires, that he marry, he may be unable to do so. Even though he is able to get over the line into marriage, he may find the years of his marital life

haunted and poisoned by constant, unconscious anxiety. In this case, the individual has automatically generalized to all women the anxiety proper only to the incest situation. He has failed to discriminate, as a free mental life would enable him to do, between the tabooed sexual feelings and objects of childhood and the relative freedom permitted to adults. To every authoritarian figure in his life he generalizes the intense anxiety that he once experienced when attempting to rival his father in the sexual field. Only when higher mental processes are restored can the individual make those discriminations which allow him to proceed freely and constructively with his life as an adult.

#### 4. *Anger-Anxiety Conflicts*

At this point we are more interested in the connection between angry emotions and fear than we are in the problem of how angry feelings are aroused in the child. We assume, however, as before that anger responses are produced by the innumerable and unavoidable frustration situations of child life. In the frustration situation, new and strong responses are tried out. Some of these have the effect of inflicting pain on other people. Society takes a special stand toward such anger responses, generally inhibiting them and allowing them reign only in a few circumstances (self-defense, war, etc.). Many of these attack, or "put through the act," responses produce strong stimuli, and these we recognize as the emotion of anger. Lift the veil of repression covering the childhood mental life of a neurotic person and you come at once upon the smoking responses of anger.

*Patriarchal code on child's anger.* Parents intuitively resent and fear the anger and rage of a child, and they have the strong support of the culture in suppressing its anger. Direct punishment is probably used much more frequently when the child is angry and aggressive than in any other circumstance. More or less without regard to what the child is angry about, fear is attached to the stimuli of anger. The virtuous chastisement of the rebellious child is an age-old feature of our patriarchal culture. According to the old Connecticut Blue Laws, a father could kill a disobedient son (Blue Laws of Connecticut, 1861, Section 14, p. 69). Even though this code was never exercised in this extreme in recent times, it shows the complete freedom to punish which was once culturally allowed parents. As the domestic representative of the patriarch in his absence, the mother is free to punish children "in their own interest."

*How fear is attached to anger cues.* We have already noted the situation of early cleanliness training as one tending to produce angry confusion in



the small child. At earliest ages the cultural practice seems to be that of extinguishing anger rather than punishing it; that is, the child is segregated, left to "cry and thresh it out." However, parents' motivation to teach the child cleanliness training is so strong that they frequently also use punishment, especially in the case of what they interpret as stubborn or defiant behavior. Anxiety responses therefore become attached not only to the cues produced by the forbidden situation but also to the cues produced by the emotional responses which the child is making at the time. It is this latter connection which creates the inner mental or emotional conflict. After this learning has occurred, the first cues produced by angry emotions may set off anxiety responses which "outcompete" the angry emotional responses themselves. The person can thus be made helpless to use his anger even in those situations where culture does permit it. He is viewed as abnormally meek or long-suffering. Robbing a person of his anger completely may be a dangerous thing since some capacity for anger seems to be needed in the affirmative personality.

*Other frustrations producing anger.* The same state of affairs can prevail and be additionally reinforced as a result of the frustrations occurring in the sex-training situation. If the child is punished for masturbating it may react with the response of anger. The parent may not notice the provocative circumstance but see only that the child has become mysteriously "naughty." Its naughtiness may be punished and the connection between anger and fear be strengthened.

Parental rejection or desertion may likewise produce anger in the child. If the child feels secure only when the parents are present, it may react with fear when the parents leave or when they threaten to leave again. When the parents return, the child may make excessive claims, want unusual favors, "be clingy." To these demanding and possessive gestures on the part of the child the parent may react with unintelligent punishment, thus again teaching the child to fear.

The new tasks involved in growing up impose many frustrations on the child. Giving up long-standing privileges may arouse rage. Being forced to try out new responses, such as putting on its own clothes or tying its own shoe laces, can anger the child. If it screams, lunges, slaps at the parent in these circumstances, punishment is the almost inevitable answer, and the connection between anger and fear is additionally strengthened.

*Sibling rivalry.* Rivalry between siblings is a constant incitement to anger, and such rivalry occurs in every household, without exception, where there are siblings of younger ages. The occasions for rivalry seem innumerable.

Siblings may compete for evidences of parental love. If the parent disappoints a child, that child may "take it out" on the luckier brother or sister. Younger children may anger older ones by being allowed to assume too quickly privileges which the older have long waited and worked for. Older children may tease and torment younger ones in retaliation. Sometimes the younger child is resented merely for existing and for having displaced the older one and alloyed its satisfaction in being the unique child.

The younger children may enjoy privileges which the older have been forced to abandon and thus create some degree of unconscious resentment. Younger children may tyrannize over older ones by too freely playing with or even destroying their toys and precious objects. Parents should intervene and prevent such behavior but often they do not, and the older child revenges himself in roundabout ways. Younger children may resent the privileges enjoyed by the older and attempt to punish older siblings for their greater freedom. These angry displays result in punishment of the one or the other child by the parents—and sometimes of both. The younger children tend to "catch it" more from the older, and the older children more from the parents. Though parents may mitigate these angry relationships between siblings by just rules which are honestly enforced, there seems no way to take all the hostile strain out of such relations.

*Mental limitations.* Small children confront an unintelligible world. Many of their frustrations result from this fact. They do not have the mental units to be patient and foresightful. They do not know how to comfort themselves while waiting. They cannot live in the light of a plan which promises to control the future. Since so much is frustrating to them that is later bearable, they are especially prone to anger. They want to know "Why isn't the circus here today?" "Why do I have to wait 'til my birthday to get a present?" "Why does Daddy have to go to work just when it's so much fun to play with him?" Living in the present and being unable to reassure themselves about the future, young children resort to anger at these inevitable frustrations. Adults experience the hostile or destructive behavior of young children as a nuisance, do not understand its inevitability, and frequently punish aggressive responses.

*Devious aggression.* If anger must be abandoned as a response in a frustrating situation, other responses will be tried out such as pleading for what one cannot take by force or submitting to frustrations which can only be worsened through opposition. Devious forms of aggression are particularly likely to occur in this case. The individual can be punished for direct anger responses but it is much harder to catch him at roundabout aggression. He

may learn to lie in wait and take revenge by hastening and sharpening punishment which his opponent has invoked in some other way. Gossip, deceit, creating dangerous confusion about agreements and life relationships may all be indirect modes of angry reaction.

*Anger conflict unlabeled.* As in the case of sex-anxiety conflicts, the anger-anxiety conflict is likely to be poorly labeled. Verbal skills are at a low level when much of this training is going on. Repression of the language describing anger-anxiety conflicts may occur because conflict is thus, momentarily at least, reduced. As a result, the individual cannot, in later life, be selectively angry, showing anger in just those social situations in which it is permitted and rejecting anger where it is not.

*The overinhibited person.* Inhibition of anger may occur in two different degrees. The overt, or some of the overt, responses of direct aggression may be inhibited. Some such inhibitions must occur if a child is to live in our culture. The process may, however, go farther and the emotion of anger itself be throttled. If the response-produced drives of anger evoke intense fear, the individual may be incapable of a normal life. The victim loses the core of an affirmative personality. He may be unable to compete as is demanded by our society in school or business spheres. He may be additionally shamed because he cannot bring himself to fight. He may depend unduly on others, waiting for them to give him what is everyone's right to take. Such a child cannot be a self-maintaining person because he cannot produce any anger responses at all, let alone those which are "legitimate and proper."

Since many outlets for anger are permitted adults which are not permitted to children, the person who is overtrained to inhibit anger may seem childish in that he is still following the age-graded code of childhood and is unable to embrace the freer standards of adulthood. One of the chief tasks of psychotherapy, in the case of unduly inhibited persons, is to enable them to name and describe their angry feelings so that they may extinguish undue fear and begin to learn a proportionate self-assertiveness.

*Frustrated mobility aspirations produce aggression.* There is little doubt that adults can be in conflict concerning their mobility strivings and that these conflicts can lead to pathological results in behavior. The conflict could be described somewhat as follows: In order to be strong and safe, or stronger and safer, the person wants to identify with and possess the symbols of a social group above that of his original family. In order to make this transition, however, certain prescribed routes must be followed. The person must have a talent which brings him in touch with and makes him useful to the group into which he wants entry. This talent could be intellectual, could be

a facility for making money, could be beauty, could be an exceptionally loving and understanding personality. If an individual has the wish to change position but does not have such a talent or does not enjoy it to a sufficient degree, he may find it impossible to make the transition. He may find himself unable to establish the contacts which will enable him to learn the rituals of behavior of the superordinate group. He may gradually come to know that, though "the promised land" is in sight, he will never enter it. Meanwhile the group he is trying to leave punishes him for being "different" and the group he tries to enter rejects him as presumptuous. The realization, conscious or unconscious, that his campaign has failed may serve as a severe frustration and produce varying types of aggressive and compensatory behavior. The resentment of the person who fails of mobility is likely to be severely punished and thus to create an acute anger-fear conflict.

*Mobility conflicts which are unconscious.* Except in one circumstance, which we shall come to in a moment, it does not seem likely that conflicts such as the one just described are engendered in early childhood. The conflict may nevertheless be unconscious. This unconsciousness of the elements of an adult conflict can arise because the mobile person gets little help from his society in labeling his behavior. He is not told what he is trying to do, and he has no clear understanding of what the techniques are. If he hits on the means of mobility, it is, from his point of view, a matter of luck or accident. He is ordinarily not permitted to think that different social classes exist because the social beliefs which protect the class system forbid this recognition. Usually the mobile individual sees himself only as rising in some value such as "wealth" or occupation but he does not realize that his real mobility will be founded on a complex set of behavioral adaptations and changes in taste and outlook. Usually, therefore, the mobile person does not know what is happening to him while it is happening, does not know how he failed if he fails, and does not know until "afterward" how he succeeded if he succeeds. This is a set of conditions which is bound to baffle and to arouse a confusion of angry, rebellious, apathetic, and submissive responses.

*Children of a mixed-class marriage.* The one circumstance that we can see under which difference in social class can have an effect on a small child is the case where the child is born of a mixed-class marriage. If the mother is superordinate, she might in some ways "look down" on the father, apologize for him, and limit his usefulness as a model to her male child. Such a mother may be unduly "ambitious" for her children, attempting to speed them over the landscape of childhood instead of allowing them to find their natural pace through it. She may get satisfaction in imposing early cleanliness training



because it seems to her like a guarantee of the future precocity of the child. She may inculcate the sex taboos strongly because she feels that the "goodness" of the child in this respect will keep it out of "bad company" and aid its development in the schools. She may handle its angry tendencies severely in the hope of making it amenable and yet urge it to highly competitive performance outside the home. One would predict that this kind of family training would give a special coloring to the circumstances which ordinarily produce conflict in small children.

A child in a class-stable family with parents matched from the class standpoint would not ordinarily discover in the early years of life that there is any group "above" its parents. During the formative period these parents would play their august roles, majestic in their competence and authority so far as the child could see. It would only be later in life, perhaps first during school days, that the child would learn that there are any people who look down upon it or its parents. Undoubtedly such knowledge would have some kind of effect on the career of the child, but we cannot say what the possible outcomes might be. We can be sure, however, that the evaluation put on the self and the family by the surrounding society will be a fact of importance in the developmental history of every child.

### *Summary*

Conflict itself is no novelty. Emotional conflicts are the constant accompaniment of life at every age and social level. Conflicts differ also in strength, some producing strong and some weak stimuli. Where conflicts are strong and unconscious, the individuals afflicted keep on making the same old mistakes and getting punished in the same old way. To the degree that the conflict can be made conscious, the ingenuity and inventiveness of higher mental life can aid in finding new ways out of the conflict situation. This applies to all emotional dilemmas, to those which survive from early childhood and to those which are created in the course of later life.

High drives produced during the nursing period can have disturbing side-effects. The child first faces severe cultural pressure in the cleanliness-training situation. At this time intense anger-anxiety conflicts can arise. Similarly, in the discipline of the masturbation habit and of heterosexual approach tendencies, the sex-anxiety conflict is regularly created in all of us. In some it has traumatic intensity. When the elements of this conflict are unconscious, they can have an abiding effect on life adjustment in the marital sphere. The culture takes a harsh attitude toward the angry and hostile behavior of children and regularly attaches anxiety to it, usually by direct punishment.

Anger can be aroused in any of the situations of childhood where frustrating conditions are created. Conflicts centering around social class and mobility are known, especially in families where the parents have different social aspirations for the child.

Not all conflict arises through the pitting of primary drives one against the other, as in the case of hunger vs. pain. It is possible to have severe conflict based on one primary and one strong learned drive. This is exemplified by the sex-anxiety conflict. It is further possible to have severe conflict when two strong learned drives are involved—as in the case of anger-anxiety. In later life many of the strong learned drives, some quite remote from their primitive sources of reinforcement, can produce painful conflicts. "Ambition" can be pitted against "loyalty." The wish to be truthful can be arrayed against "tact." Wishes for social advancement may be deterred by the fear of appearing vulgar and "pushy." Many of these complex learned drives have never been effectively described in terms of the reinforcing circumstances. We do know, however, that when they compete they can plunge the individual into a painful state.

We must admit that we do not know the exact conditions under which the common conflict-producing circumstances of life generate severe conflicts in some and not-so-severe conflicts in others. We know that the conditions and factors described here *do* occur in those who later turn out to show neurotic behavior. It may be that the circumstances of life are not really "the same for normals and neurotics," that this sameness is an illusion based on poor discrimination of the actual circumstances. Therefore it may actually be that some individuals have much stronger conflicts than others. It may be that some are less able to use higher mental processes than others and are therefore less well able to resolve traumatic tension. It may be that some are more "pre-disposed" than others in that they have stronger primary drives, or stronger tendencies to inhibition, or in other unknown respects. It is quite likely that the provocative circumstances of later life which precipitate neuroses are more severe in some cases than others; or that some are exposed to just those circumstances which for them excite neurotic behavior but that others are luckier and do not come into contact with just those adverse conditions which would set them off.

We must also say that the data available are subject to several severe faults. Much of the data is from clinical case histories and may be damaged by various flaws in reporting and by inability to report. There may also be, and probably are, various kinds of sampling errors. Neurotic people may come from "a different basket." We have not been able to study the matter

experimentally to see just which factors differentiate neurotic persons from their normal controls. Many fundamental measurements needed, such as those concerned with the strength of anxiety and other learned drives, cannot yet be made. This qualification has, however, a positive side. We do the best we can with the data we have but affirm the lacks in our data and the need for rigorous time-consuming longitudinal studies. We do not yet have a science of child rearing and until we do our sketches of the trauma-producing years of childhood are bound to be rough.

## KAREN HORNEY

**K**AREN HORNEY was born in Hamburg, Germany, in 1885. Beginning her practice as a psychoanalyst in 1913 in Berlin, she came in 1932 to the United States, where she resided until her death twenty years later. For fifteen years of her professional life, Horney was an orthodox Freudian. She broke away, however, from Freud's biological emphasis with her own re-examination of the problem of neurosis. To Horney, the neurotic personality, seeking defenses against anxiety, functions in ways largely determined by the culture. Soon, the break with Freud went deeper and extended to the area of therapy; Horney decided that the present situation of the patient rather than the "causes" of the neurosis embedded in early childhood should be the starting point for analysis. In the following selection from *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time* (1937), she is concerned with showing that a person's quest for the publicly acclaimed desiderata of his own culture may merely be a reflection of his neurotic anxieties. By emphasizing the fact that neurotic patterns are relative to the cultural contexts in which they occur, Horney makes clear the relevance of anthropology to psychoanalysis. In her specific consideration of power, prestige, and possession she suggests linkages with sociologically oriented accounts, notably that of Max Weber (1864-1920), of the development of capitalistic society. Horney's primary aim, however, is to make Freudian thought more available for clinical uses. Among her several later books are the influential *New Ways in Psychoanalysis* (1939) and *Our Inner Conflicts* (1945).



### THE NEUROTIC PERSONALITY OF OUR TIME

#### CHAPTER X: THE QUEST FOR POWER, PRESTIGE, AND POSSESSION

The quest for affection is one way frequently used in our culture for obtaining reassurance against anxiety. The quest for power, prestige, and possession is another.

I should probably explain why I discuss power, prestige, and possession as aspects of a single problem. In detail it certainly makes a big difference for a personality whether the prevailing tendency is for one or another of these goals. Which of the goals prevails in the neurotic's striving for reassurance depends on external circumstances as well as on differences in individual gifts

---

This selection has been reprinted from *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time* by Karen Horney, by permission of W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., Copyright 1937 by W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., New York, pp. 162-187.



and psychic structure. If I deal with them as a unity it is because they all have something in common which distinguishes them from the need for affection. Winning affection means obtaining reassurance through intensified contact with others, while striving for power, prestige, and possession means obtaining reassurance through loosening of the contact with others and through fortifying one's own position.

The wish to dominate, to win prestige, to acquire wealth, is certainly not in itself a neurotic trend, just as the wish for affection is not in itself neurotic. In order to understand the characteristics of the neurotic striving in this direction it should be compared with the normal. The feeling of power, for example, may in a normal person be born of the realization of his own superior strength, whether it be physical strength or ability, mental capacities, maturity, or wisdom. Or his striving for power may be connected with some particular cause: family, political, or professional group, native land, a religious or scientific idea. The neurotic striving for power, however, is born out of anxiety, hatred, and feelings of inferiority. To put it categorically, the normal striving for power is born of strength, the neurotic of weakness.

A cultural factor is also involved. Individual power, prestige, and possession do not play a role in every culture. With the Pueblo Indians, for instance, striving for prestige is definitely discouraged, and there is but little difference in individual possessions, and thus this striving too has little importance. In that culture it would be meaningless to strive for any kind of dominance as a means of reassurance. That neurotics in our culture choose this way results from the fact that in our social structure power, prestige, and possession can give a feeling of greater security.

In searching for the conditions which produce a striving for these ends it becomes apparent that such a striving usually develops only when it has proved impossible to find reassurance for the underlying anxiety through affection. I shall cite an example which shows how such a striving can develop, in the form of ambition, when the need for affection is thwarted.

A girl was strongly attached to her brother who was four years older than she. They had indulged in tenderness of a more or less sexual character, but when the girl was eight years old her brother suddenly rejected her, pointing out that they were now too old for that sort of play. Soon after this experience the girl developed a sudden fierce ambition at school. It was caused certainly by a disappointment in her quest for affection and this was all the more painful as this child had not many people to cling to. The father was indifferent to his children, and the mother conspicuously preferred the brother. But it

was not only disappointment that she felt, but also a terrible blow to her pride. She did not realize that the change in the brother's attitude was caused simply by his approaching puberty. Therefore she felt ashamed and humiliated, and so much the more since her self-confidence had in any case stood on too insecure a basis. The mother had not wanted her in the first place, and she was made to feel insignificant because the mother, a beautiful woman, was much admired by everyone; besides, the brother was not only preferred by the mother but also enjoyed her confidence. The marriage of the parents was unhappy and the mother discussed all her troubles with the brother. Thus the girl felt completely left out. She made one more attempt to get the affection she needed: she fell in love with a boy whom she met on a trip immediately after the painful experience with her brother, was quite elated, and began spinning glorious fantasies about this boy. When he dropped out of sight she reacted to the new disappointment by becoming depressed.

As quite frequently happens in situations of this kind, the parents and the family physician ascribed her condition to her being in too high a class at school. They took her out of school, sent her to a summer resort for recreation, and then put her in a class a year below the one she had been in before. It was then, at the age of nine, that she showed an ambition of a rather desperate character. She could not endure being any but first in her class. At the same time her relations with other girls, which had formerly been friendly, became visibly impaired.

This example illustrates the typical factors that combine to generate a neurotic ambition: from the beginning she felt insecure because she felt unwanted; considerable antagonism was created, which could not be expressed because the mother, the dominant figure in the family, demanded blind admiration; the repressed hatred generated a great deal of anxiety; her self-esteem had never had a chance to grow, she had been humiliated on several occasions, and she felt definitely stigmatized by the experience with her brother; attempts to reach out for affection as a means of reassurance had failed.

The neurotic strivings for power, prestige, and possession serve not only as a protection against anxiety, but also as a channel through which repressed hostility can be discharged. I shall discuss first how each of these strivings offers a special protection against anxiety, and then the particular ways in which it can serve to liberate hostility.

The striving for power serves in the first place as a protection against helplessness, which . . . is one of the basic elements in anxiety. The neurotic

is so averse to any remote appearance of helplessness or weakness in himself that he will shun situations which the normal person considers entirely commonplace, such as any acceptance of guidance, advice, or help, any kind of dependence on persons or circumstances, any giving in to or agreeing with others. This protest against helplessness does not arise in all its intensity at once, but increases gradually; the more the neurotic feels factually handicapped by his inhibitions, the less he is factually able to assert himself. The weaker he factually becomes the more anxiously he has to avoid anything that has a faint resemblance to weakness.

In the second place, the neurotic striving for power serves as a protection against the danger of feeling or being regarded as insignificant. The neurotic develops a rigid and irrational ideal of strength which makes him believe he should be able to master any situation, no matter how difficult, and should master it right away. This ideal becomes linked with pride, and as a consequence the neurotic considers weakness not only as a danger but also as a disgrace. He classifies people as either "strong" or "weak," admiring the former and despising the latter. He goes to extremes also in what he considers to be weakness. He has more or less contempt for all persons who agree with him or give in to his wishes, who have inhibitions or do not control their emotions so closely that they always show an impassive face. He despises the same qualities in himself as well. He feels humiliated if he has to recognize the existence of an anxiety or an inhibition in himself, and thus despises himself for having a neurosis and is anxious to keep this fact a secret. He also despises himself for not being able to cope with it alone.

The particular forms that such a striving for power will take depend upon what lack of power is most feared or despised. I shall mention a few expressions of this striving that are especially frequent.

For one, the neurotic will desire to have control over others as well as over himself. He wants nothing to happen that he has not initiated or approved of. This quest for control may take the attenuated form of consciously permitting the other to have full freedom, but insisting on knowing about everything he does, and feeling irritated if anything is kept a secret. Tendencies to control may be repressed to such a degree that not only the person himself, but even those about him, may be convinced of his great generosity in allowing freedom to the other. If a person represses his desire for control so completely he may, however, become depressed or have severe headaches or stomach upsets every time the other has an appointment with other friends or unexpectedly comes home late. Not knowing the cause of the disturbances he may accredit them to weather conditions, to an error in diet or similar

irrelevant conditions. Much of what appears as curiosity is determined by a secret wish to control the situation.

Also persons of this type are inclined to want to be right all the time, and are irritated at being proved wrong, even if only in an insignificant detail. They have to know everything better than anyone else, an attitude which may at times be embarrassingly conspicuous. Persons who are otherwise serious and dependable, when confronted with a question to which they do not know the answer, may pretend to know, or may invent something, even if ignorance in this particular instance would not discredit them. Sometimes the emphasis is on the need to know in advance what will happen, to anticipate and predict every possibility. This attitude may go with a distaste for any situation involving uncontrollable factors. No risk should be taken. The emphasis on self-control shows in an aversion to being carried away by any feelings. The attraction which a neurotic woman feels for a man may suddenly turn into contempt if he falls in love with her. Patients of this type find it hard to allow themselves much drift in free associations, because that would mean losing control and letting themselves be carried into unknown territory.

Another attitude that may characterize the neurotic in his striving for power is the desire to have his own way. It may be a constant source of acute irritation to him if others do not do exactly what he expects of them and exactly at the time he expects it. The attitude of impatience is closely connected with this aspect of the striving for power. Any kind of delay, any enforced waiting, even if only for traffic lights, will become a source of irritation. More often than not the neurotic himself is not aware of the existence, or at least of the extent, of his bossing attitude. It is a fact definitely to his interest not to recognize it and not to change it, because it has important protective functions. Nor should others recognize it, because if they do there is a danger of losing their affection.

This lack of awareness has important implications for love relationships. If a lover or husband does not exactly live up to expectations, if he is late, does not telephone, goes out of town, a neurotic woman feels that he does not love her. Instead of recognizing that what she feels is a plain anger reaction to a lack of compliance with wishes of her own, which as often as not are inarticulate, she interprets the situation as evidence that she is unwanted. This fallacy is very frequent indeed in our culture, and it contributes greatly to the feeling of being unwanted which is often a crucial factor in neuroses. As a rule it is learned from parents. A dominating mother feeling resentment about a child's disobedience will believe, and declare, that the child does not



love her. A queer contradiction often arises on this basis which may considerably frustrate any love relationships. Neurotic girls cannot love a "weak" man because of their contempt for any weakness; but neither can they cope with a "strong" man because they expect their partner always to give in. Hence what they secretly look for is the hero, the superstrong man, who at the same time is so weak that he will bend to all their wishes without hesitation.

Another attitude in the striving for power is that of never giving in. Agreeing with an opinion or accepting advice, even if they are considered right, is felt as a weakness, and the mere idea of doing so provokes rebellion. Persons for whom this attitude is important are inclined to lean over backward and, out of sheer fear of giving in, compulsively take the opposite stand. The most general expression of this attitude is the neurotic's secret insistence that the world should adapt itself to him instead of his adapting himself to the world. One of the basic difficulties in psychoanalytic therapy comes from this source. The ultimate reason for a patient's analysis is not the gaining of knowledge or insight, but the use of this insight in order to change his attitudes. In spite of recognizing that a change would be for his own good, a neurotic of this type abhors this prospect of changing because it implies for him a final giving in. The incapacity to do this has implications also for love relationships. Love, whatever else it may mean, always implies surrender, giving in to the lover as well as to one's own feelings. The more a person, whether man or woman, is incapable of such giving in, the more unsatisfactory will be his love relationships. This same factor may have a bearing also on frigidity, inasmuch as having an orgasm presupposes just this capacity of completely letting go.

The influence which we have seen that the striving for power has on love relations allows us to understand more completely many of the implications of the neurotic need for affection. Many of the attitudes involved in the striving for affection cannot be wholly understood without considering the part that is played in them by the striving for power.

The quest for power is, as we have seen, a protection against helplessness and against insignificance. This latter function it shares with the quest for prestige.

The neurotic that falls in this group develops a stringent need to impress others, to be admired and respected. He will have fantasies of impressing others with beauty or intelligence or with some outstanding accomplishment; he will spend money lavishly and conspicuously; he will have to be able to talk about the latest books and plays, and to know prominent people. He will

not be able to have anyone as a friend, husband, wife, employee, who does not admire him. His entire self-esteem rests on being admired, and shrinks to nothing if he does not receive admiration. Because of his excessive sensitivity, and because he is continually sensing humiliations, life is a constant ordeal. Often he is unaware of feeling humiliated, because the knowledge would be too painful; but whether aware of it or not, he reacts to any such feeling with a rage proportionate to the pain felt. Hence his attitude leads to a constant generation of new hostility and new anxiety.

For purposes of mere description such a person could be called narcissistic. If he is considered dynamically, however, the term is misleading because, though he is constantly preoccupied with inflating his ego, he does it not primarily for the sake of self-love, but for the sake of protecting himself against a feeling of insignificance and humiliation, or, in positive terms, for the sake of repairing a crushed self-esteem.

The more distant his relations with others, the more his quest for prestige can be internalized; it appears then as a need to be infallible and wonderful in his own eyes. Every shortcoming, whether recognized as such or only felt dimly, is considered a humiliation.

Protection against helplessness and insignificance or humiliation can be had also, in our culture, by striving for possession, inasmuch as wealth gives both power and prestige. The irrational quest for possession is so widespread in our culture that it is only by making comparisons with other cultures that one recognizes that it is not a general human instinct, either in the form of an acquisitive instinct or in the form of a sublimation of biologically founded drives. Even in our culture compulsive striving for possession vanishes as soon as the anxieties determining it are diminished or removed.

The specific fear against which possession is a protection is that of impoverishment, destitution, dependence on others. The fear of impoverishment may be a whip driving a person to work incessantly and never miss a chance of earning money. The defensive character of this striving shows in his inability to use his money for the sake of greater enjoyment. The quest for possession need not be directed only toward money or material things, but may appear as a possessive attitude toward others and serve as a protection against losing affection. As the phenomenon of possessiveness is well known, particularly from its appearance in marriages, where law supplies a legal basis for such claims, and as its characteristics are much the same as those described when discussing the quest for power, I shall not give special examples here.

The three strivings I have described serve, as I have said, not only as reassurance against anxiety but also as a means of releasing hostility. Depend-

ing on which striving is dominant, this hostility takes the form of a tendency to domineer, a tendency to humiliate or a tendency to deprive others.

The domineering characteristic of the neurotic striving for power does not necessarily appear openly as hostility toward others. It may be disguised in socially valuable or humanistic forms, appearing for example as an attitude of giving advice, liking to manage other persons' affairs, taking the initiative or lead. But if there is hostility concealed in such attitudes, the other persons—children, marriage partners, employees—will feel it and react either with submissiveness or with opposition. The neurotic himself is usually unaware of the hostility involved. Even if he becomes infuriated when things do not go his way, he still maintains his belief that he is essentially a gentle soul who is annoyed only because people are so ill advised as to oppose him. What actually takes place, however, is that the neurotic's hostility is pressed into civilized forms and breaks out when he does not succeed in having his own way. The occasions of his irritation may be of a kind which other persons would not feel as opposition, such as a mere difference in opinion or a failure to follow his advice. Yet considerable rage may be generated by such trifles. One might consider the domineering attitude a safety valve through which a certain amount of hostility may be discharged in a non-destructive way. Since it is itself an attenuated expression of hostility it provides a means of checking purely destructive impulses.

The rage arising from opposition may be repressed and, as we have seen, the repressed hostility may then result in new anxiety. This may manifest itself in depression or fatigue. Since the occasions which arouse these reactions are so insignificant that they escape attention, and since the neurotic is not aware of his own reactions, such depressions or anxiety states may seem to have no external stimulation. Only accurate observation can gradually uncover the connection between the stimulating events and the subsequent reactions.

A further peculiarity resulting from the compulsion to domineer is the person's incapacity to have any fifty-fifty relationships. He either has to lead or he feels entirely lost, dependent, and helpless. He is so autocratic that everything falling short of complete domination is felt as subjugation. If his anger is repressed the repression may result in his feeling depressed, discouraged, and fatigued. What is felt as helplessness may, however, be only a circuitous way of assuring dominance or of expressing hostility for not being able to lead. A woman, to cite an example, was taking a walk with her husband in a foreign city. Up to a certain point she had studied a map in advance, and took the lead. But when they came to places and streets she had

not studied on the map, and where she consequently felt insecure, she yielded the guidance of the walk altogether to her husband. And although she had been gay and active until then, she suddenly felt overwhelmed by fatigue, and could hardly put one foot before the other. Most of us know of relationships between marriage partners, siblings, friends, in which the neurotic person acts like a slave driver, using his helplessness as a whip in order to compel the other to serve his will, in order to command unending attention and help. It is characteristic of these situations that the neurotic person never benefits from the efforts made for him, but responds only with renewed complaints and renewed demands, or worse, with accusations that he is neglected and abused.

The same behavior can be observed in the process of analysis. Patients of this kind may ask desperately for help, yet not only will they fail to follow any suggestion, but they will express resentment at not being helped. If they do receive help by reaching an understanding of some peculiarity they immediately fall back into their previous vexation and, as if nothing had been done, they will manage to erase the insight which was the result of the analyst's hard labor. Then the patient compels the analyst to put in new efforts which again are doomed to failure.

The patient may receive a double satisfaction from such a situation: by presenting himself as helpless he receives a sort of triumph at being able to compel the analyst to slave in his service. At the same time this strategy tends to elicit feelings of helplessness in the analyst, and thus, since his own entanglements prevent him from dominating in a constructive way, he finds a possibility of destructive domination. Needless to say, the satisfaction gained in this way is entirely unconscious, just as the technique used in order to gain it is applied unconsciously. All that the patient himself is aware of is that he is in great need of help, and does not get it. Hence the patient not only feels completely justified in his own eyes in acting as he does, but he also feels that he has a good right to be angry with the analyst. At the same time he cannot help registering the fact that he is playing an insidious game and consequently he is afraid of discovery and retaliation. Therefore in defense he feels it necessary to strengthen his position, and he does this by turning the tables. It is not that he is secretly carrying out some destructive aggression, but that the analyst is neglecting, cheating, and abusing him. This position, however, can be assumed and maintained with conviction only if he really feels victimized. Not only has a person in this condition no interest in recognizing that he is not maltreated, but on the contrary he has a strong interest in maintaining his belief. His insistence that he is being victimized



often gives rise to the impression that he wants to be maltreated. In reality he wants it as little as any of us wants it, but his belief in being maltreated has acquired too important a function to be given up easily.

There may be so much hostility involved in the domineering attitude that it creates a new anxiety. This may then result in such inhibitions as an inability to give orders, to be decisive, to express a precise opinion, with the result that the neurotic often appears unduly compliant. This in turn leads him to mistake his inhibitions for an innate softness.

In persons in whom the craving for prestige is uppermost, hostility usually takes the form of a desire to humiliate others. This desire is paramount in those persons whose own self-esteem has been wounded by humiliation and who have thus become vindictive. Usually they have gone through a series of humiliating experiences in childhood, experiences that may have had to do either with the social situation in which they grew up—such as belonging to a minority group, or being themselves poor but having wealthy relatives—or with their own individual situation, such as being discriminated against for the sake of other children, being spurned, being treated as a plaything by the parents, being sometimes spoiled and other times shamed and snubbed. Often experiences of this kind are forgotten because of their painful character, but they reappear in awareness if the problems concerning humiliation are clarified. In adult neurotics, however, never the direct but only the indirect results of these childhood situations can be observed, results which have been reinforced by passing through a "vicious circle": a feeling of humiliation; a desire to humiliate others; enhanced sensitivity to humiliation because of a fear of retaliation; enhanced wish to humiliate others.

The tendencies to humiliate are deeply repressed, usually because the neurotic, knowing from his own sensitivity how hurt and vindictive he feels when humiliated, is instinctively afraid of similar reactions in others. Nevertheless some of these tendencies may emerge without his being conscious of it: in an inadvertent disregard of others, such as letting them wait, in inadvertently bringing others into embarrassing situations, in letting others feel dependent. Even if the neurotic is completely unaware of wishing to humiliate others or of having done so, his relations with them will be pervaded by a diffuse anxiety which is revealed in a constant anticipation of rebuke or humiliation for himself. I shall return later to such fears, when discussing the fear of failure. Inhibitions resulting from this sensitivity to humiliation often appear in the form of a need to avoid anything which might possibly seem humiliating to others; such a neurotic, for example, may be incapable

of criticizing, or refusing an offer, of dismissing an employee, with the result that he often appears over-considerate or over-polite.

Finally, a tendency to humiliate may be hidden behind a tendency to admire. Since inflicting humiliation and bestowing admiration are diametrically opposed, the latter offers the best means of eradicating or concealing tendencies toward the former. This is the reason also why both these extremes are frequently to be found in the same person. There are several ways in which the two attitudes may be distributed, the reasons for the distribution being dependent on the individual. They may appear separately in different periods of life, a period of a general contempt for people succeeding a period of hero-worship; there may be admiration for men and contempt for women, or vice versa; or there may be blind admiration for one or two persons, and just as blind a contempt for the rest of the world. It is in the process of analysis that one can observe that the two attitudes in reality exist together. A patient may at the same time blindly admire and despise the analyst, either suppressing one of the two feelings or vacillating between them.

In the striving for possession hostility usually takes the form of a tendency to deprive others. The wish to cheat, steal from, exploit, or frustrate others is not in itself neurotic. It may be culturally patterned, or it may be warranted by the actual situation, or it may normally be considered a question of expediency. In the neurotic person, however, these tendencies are highly charged with emotion. Even if the positive advantages he derives from them are slight or irrelevant he will feel elated and triumphant if he meets with success; in order to find a bargain, for example, he may spend time and energy entirely disproportionate to the amount saved. His satisfaction at success has two sources: a feeling that he has outwitted others, and a feeling that he has injured others.

This tendency to deprive others takes many forms. The neurotic person will feel resentment toward a physician if he is not treated gratuitously, or for less than he is able to pay. He will feel anger toward his employees if they are not willing to work overtime without pay. In relations with friends and children the exploiting tendency is often justified by alleging that they have an obligation toward him. Parents may actually destroy their children's lives by demanding sacrifices on such a basis, and even if the tendency does not appear in such destructive forms, any mother who acts according to the belief that the child exists to give her satisfaction is bound to exploit the child emotionally. A neurotic of this kind may also tend to withhold things from others, withhold money which he ought to pay, information which he could

give, sexual satisfaction which he has led another to expect. The presence of robbing tendencies may be indicated by repeated dreams of stealing, or he may have conscious impulses to steal, which he checks; he may actually have been a kleptomaniac at some period.

Persons of this general type are often unaware that they purposely deprive others. The anxiety connected with their wish to do so may result in an inhibition as soon as something is expected of them, so that, for example, they forget to buy an expected birthday present, or they become impotent if a woman is willing to yield to them. This anxiety, however, does not always lead to an actual inhibition, but may become apparent in a lurking fear that they are exploiting or depriving others, as indeed they are, though consciously they would indignantly repudiate such an intention. A neurotic may even have this fear concerning certain of his activities in which these tendencies are actually not present, at the same time remaining unaware that in other activities he does exploit or deprive other people.

These tendencies to deprive others are accompanied by an emotional attitude of begrudging envy. Most of us will feel some envy if others have certain advantages which we should like to have ourselves. With the normal person, however, the emphasis lies on the fact that he wishes to have these advantages himself; with the neurotic the emphasis lies on the fact that he begrudges them to others, even if he does not want them at all. Mothers of this kind often begrudge the gaiety of their children and tell them that "those that sing before breakfast will cry before supper."

The neurotic will try to disguise the crudity of his begrudging attitude by putting it on the basis of a justified envy. The advantage of others, whether it concern a doll, a girl, leisure, or a job, appears so glorious and desirable that he feels entirely justified in his envy. This justification is possible only with the help of some inadvertent falsification of facts: an under-estimation of what he has himself, and an illusion that the advantages of others are the really desirable ones. The self-deception may go so far as to make him actually believe that he is in a miserable state because he fails to have the one advantage in which another person surpasses him, completely forgetting that in all other respects he would not like to change with the other. The price he has to pay for this falsification is incapacity to enjoy and appreciate the possibilities for happiness that are available. This incapacity, however, serves to protect him from the much-feared envy of others. He does not deliberately keep himself from satisfaction with what he has, as many normal persons who have good reason to protect themselves against the envy of certain persons, and therefore misrepresent their real situation; he

does a thorough job of it, and really deprives himself of any enjoyment. Thus he defeats his own ends: he wants to have everything, but in consequence of his destructive drives and anxieties he emerges at the end with empty hands.

It is obvious that the tendency to deprive or exploit, like all the other hostile tendencies we have discussed, not only arises from impaired personal relations but results in further impairment. Particularly if this tendency is more or less unconscious, as is usually the case, it necessarily renders the person self-conscious or even timid toward others. He may behave and feel free and natural toward persons from whom he does not expect anything, but he will become self-conscious as soon as there is any possibility of getting any advantage from someone. The advantage may concern tangible things, such as information or a recommendation, or it may concern something much less tangible, such as the mere possibility of future favors. This is true in erotic as in all other relationships. A neurotic of this type may be frank and natural with men for whom she does not care, but feel embarrassed and constrained toward a man whom she wants to like her, because, for her, obtaining his affection is identified with getting something out of him.

Persons of this type may have an exceptionally good earning capacity, thus leading their impulses into profitable channels. More often, they will develop inhibitions concerning the earning of money, so that they will hesitate to ask for pay or will do a great deal of work without getting an adequate reward, thus appearing to behave more generously than is really the case. They are likely then to become discontented at their inadequate earnings, often without knowing the reason for the discontentment. If the neurotic's inhibitions become so ramified that they pervade his whole personality the result will be a general incapacity to stand on his own feet, and he will have to be supported by others. He will then lead a parasitic kind of existence, thus satisfying his exploiting tendencies. This parasitic attitude will not necessarily appear in the gross form of "the world owes me a living," but may take the more subtle form of expecting others to do him favors, to take the initiative, to give him ideas for his work, in short, expecting others to take the responsibility for his life. The result is an odd attitude toward life in general: he has no clear conception that this is his own life, and that it is up to him to make something out of it or to spoil it, but he lives as if what happens to him were no concern of his own, as if good and evil came from the outside without his having anything to do about it, as if he had a right to expect the good things from others and to blame them for all bad things. Since in these circumstances usually more bad than good is produced, a growing embitterment against the world is almost inevitable. This parasitic attitude can be found also in the



neurotic need for affection, especially when the need for affection takes the form of a craving for material favors.

Another frequent outcome of the neurotic's tendency to deprive or exploit is an anxiety that he will be cheated or exploited by others. He may live in a perpetual fear that someone will take advantage of him, that money or ideas will be stolen from him, and he will react to every person he meets with the fear that this person might want something of him. A seemingly disproportionate amount of anger is discharged if he is really cheated, if, for example, a taxi-driver does not take the shortest route, or if a waiter overcharges him. The psychic value of projecting one's own abusing tendencies on others is obvious. It is far more pleasant to feel a righteous indignation at others than to face a problem of one's own. Moreover, hysterical persons often use accusations as a means of intimidation, or bullying the other into feeling guilty and thus letting himself be abused. Sinclair Lewis has given a brilliant description of this kind of strategy in the character of Mrs. Dodsworth.

The aims and functions of the neurotic striving for power, prestige, and possession can be very roughly schematized as follows:

AIMS	REASSURANCE AGAINST	HOSTILITY APPEARS IN THE FORM OF
power .....	helplessness .....	tendency to domineer
prestige .....	humiliation .....	tendency to humiliate
possession .....	destitution .....	tendency to deprive others

It is an achievement of Alfred Adler to have seen and emphasized the importance of these strivings, the role they play in neurotic manifestations, and the disguises in which they appear. Adler, however, assumes these strivings to be the foremost trend in human nature, not in themselves requiring any explanation;<sup>1</sup> their intensification in neurotics he traces back to feelings of inferiority and to physical inadequacies.

Freud has also seen many of the implications of these strivings, but he does not regard them as belonging together. The striving for prestige he considers an expression of narcissistic tendencies. He would originally have considered the strivings for power and possession, and the hostility involved in them, as derivatives of the "anal-sadistic stage." Later, however, he recognized that such hostilities could not be reduced to a sexual basis, and assumed them to be an expression of a "death instinct," thus remaining faithful to his biological orientation. Neither Adler nor Freud has recognized the role that anxiety plays in bringing about such drives, nor has either of them seen the cultural implications in the forms in which they are expressed.

<sup>1</sup> The same one-sided evaluation of the wish for power is found in Nietzsche, *Der Wille zur Macht* [The Will to Power].

## MARTIN BUBER

BORN in Vienna, in 1878, Martin Buber spent his early years in the home of his grandfather, a Hebrew scholar, in Lemberg. Here he was surrounded by the pietistic manifestations of religion that attracted him deeply. Buber studied at the universities of Vienna, Leipzig, Berlin, and Zurich. Here he found himself attracted by the advanced thought of the age in philosophy, art, and literature. As he entered middle life, Buber began to formulate a personal religious and social philosophy that blended those elements in both traditions that were appealing to him. In the process, he has emerged as one of the most influential thinkers about religion in today's world. Among his works of general interest are *Daniel* (1913; untranslated); *I and Thou* (1923; English translation, 1937), his most important book; and *Between Man and Man* (1948), which contains the English translations of five essays, among them *Dialogue* (1929), from which the following selection has been taken.

Buber's professional career began as a journalist and editor. Later he became professor of comparative religion in Frankfurt University and director of the College of Jewish Studies in Frankfurt. In 1938 he left Germany to become professor of social philosophy at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, a post from which he retired in 1948, though continuing to reside in Israel.

Central to Buber's thought is the conception that both religious faith and community are discovered by each person anew in an existential situation in which he recognizes himself as confronting and being confronted by God. The relation between man and God is exemplary for all personal relations and radically different from man's experience with things. It is a living relationship, a "dialogue" in which both man and God have real parts. In the living relationship between man and God, or between man and man, neither is or can be an "object"; both are "subjects." Implicit in Buber's philosophy is the suggestion that only in such relations of an "I and thou" character can truly humane communication, and hence community, be established among men. He advances anew Immanuel Kant's ethical principle of treating others as ends in themselves, never as means to one's private ends.

The translation of *Dialogue* (*Zwiesprache*) from the original German is by Ronald Gregor Smith.



*BETWEEN MAN AND MAN**Section I: Description*

## SILENCE WHICH IS COMMUNICATION

Just as the most eager speaking at one another does not make a conversation (this is most clearly shown in that curious sport, aptly termed discussion, that is, "breaking apart," which is indulged in by men who are to some extent gifted with the ability to think), so for a conversation no sound is necessary, not even a gesture. Speech can renounce all the media of sense, and it is still speech.

Of course I am not thinking of lovers' tender silence, resting in one another, the expression and discernment of which can be satisfied by a glance, indeed by the mere sharing of a gaze which is rich in inward relations. Nor am I thinking of the mystical shared silence, such as is reported of the Franciscan Aegidius and Louis of France (or, almost identically, of two rabbis of the Hasidim) who, meeting once, did not utter a word, but "taking their stand in the reflection of the divine Face" experienced one another. For here too there is still the expression of a gesture, of the physical attitude of the one to the other.

What I am thinking of I will make clear by an example.

Imagine two men sitting beside one another in any kind of solitude of the world. They do not speak with one another, they do not look at one another, not once have they turned to one another. They are not in one another's confidence, the one knows nothing of the other's career, early that morning they got to know one another in the course of their travels. In this moment neither is thinking of the other; we do not need to know what their thoughts are. The one is sitting on the common seat obviously after his usual manner, calm, hospitably disposed to everything that may come. His being seems to say it is too little to be ready, one must also be really *there*. The other, whose attitude does not betray him, is a man who holds himself in reserve, withholds himself. But if we know about him we know that a childhood's spell is laid on him, that his withholding of himself is something other than an attitude, behind all attitude is entrenched the impenetrable inability to communicate himself. And now—let us imagine that this is one of the hours

---

This selection has been reprinted from Martin Buber, *Between Man and Man* (pp. 3-5, 8-13, 14-15, 16-24, 25-28, 30-39; 1947, Kegan Paul, London) by permission of The Macmillan Company, N.Y., holder of American permission rights.

which succeed in bursting asunder the seven iron bands about our heart—imperceptibly the spell is lifted. But even now the man does not speak a word, does not stir a finger. Yet he does something. The lifting of the spell has happened to him—no matter from where—without his doing. But this is what he does now: he releases in himself a reserve over which only he himself has power. Unreservedly communication streams from him, and the silence bears it to his neighbour. Indeed it was intended for him, and he receives it unreservedly as he receives all genuine destiny that meets him. He will be able to tell no one, not even himself, what he has experienced. What does he now “know” of the other? No more knowing is needed. For where unreserve has ruled, even wordlessly, between men, the word of dialogue has happened sacramentally.

#### OPINIONS AND THE FACTUAL

Human dialogue, therefore, although it has its distinctive life in the sign, that is in sound and gesture (the letters of language have their place in this only in special instances, as when, between friends in a meeting, notes describing the atmosphere skim back and forth across the table), can exist without the sign, but admittedly not in an objectively comprehensible form. On the other hand an element of communication, however inward, seems to belong to its essence. But in its highest moments dialogue reaches out even beyond these boundaries. It is completed outside contents, even the most personal, which are or can be communicated. Moreover it is completed not in some “mystical” event, but in one that is in the precise sense factual, thoroughly dovetailed into the common human world and the concrete time-sequence.

One might indeed be inclined to concede this as valid for the special realm of the erotic. But I do not intend to bring even this in here as an explanation. For Eros is in reality much more strangely composed than in Plato’s genealogical myth, and the erotic is in no way, as might be supposed, purely a compressing and unfolding of dialogue. Rather do I know no other realm where, as in this one . . . dialogue and monologue are so mingled and opposed. Man’s celebrated ecstasies of love are nothing but the lover’s delight in the possibilities of his own person which are actualized in unexpected fulness.

I would rather think of something unpretentious yet significant—of the glances which strangers exchange in a busy street as they pass one another with unchanging pace. Some of these glances, though not charged with destiny, nevertheless reveal to one another two dialogical natures. . . .



## SETTING OF THE QUESTION

The life of dialogue is not limited to men's traffic with one another; it is, it has shown itself to be, a relation of men to one another that is only *represented* in their traffic.

Accordingly, even if speech and communication may be dispensed with, the life of dialogue seems, from what we may perceive, to have inextricably joined to it as its minimum constitution one thing, the mutuality of the inner action. Two men bound together in dialogue must obviously be turned to one another, they must therefore—no matter with what measure of activity or indeed of consciousness of activity—have turned to one another.

It is good to put this forward so crudely and formally. For behind the formulating question about the limits of a category under discussion is hidden a question which bursts all formulas asunder.

## OBSERVING, LOOKING ON, BECOMING AWARE

We may distinguish three ways in which we are able to perceive a man who is living before our eyes. (I am not thinking of an object of scientific knowledge, of which I do not speak here.) The object of our perception does not need to know of us, of our being there. It does not matter at this point whether he stands in a relation or has a standpoint towards the perceiver.

The *observer* is wholly intent on fixing the observed man in his mind, on "noting" him. He probes him and writes him up. That is, he is diligent to write up as many "traits" as possible. He lies in wait for them, that none may escape him. The object consists of traits, and it is known what lies behind each of them. Knowledge of the human system of expression constantly incorporates in the instant the newly appearing individual variations, and remains applicable. A face is nothing but physiognomy, movements nothing but gestures of expression.

The *onlooker* is not at all intent. He takes up the position which lets him see the object freely, and undisturbed awaits what will be presented to him. Only at the beginning may he be ruled by purpose, everything beyond that is involuntary. He does not go around taking notes indiscriminately, he lets himself go, he is not in the least afraid of forgetting something ("Forgetting is good," he says). He gives his memory no tasks, he trusts its organic work which preserves what is worth preserving. He does not lead in the grass as green fodder, as the observer does; he turns it and lets the sun shine on it. He pays no attention to traits ("Traits lead astray," he says). What stands out for him from the object is what is not "character" and not "expression"

("The interesting is not important," he says). All great artists have been onlookers.

But there is a perception of a decisively different kind.

The onlooker and the observer are similarly orientated, in that they have a position, namely, the very desire to perceive the man who is living before our eyes. Moreover, this man is for them an object separated from themselves and their personal life, who can in fact for this sole reason be "properly" perceived. Consequently what they experience in this way, whether it is, as with the observer, a sum of traits, or, as with the onlooker, an existence, neither demands action from them nor inflicts destiny on them. But rather the whole is given over to the aloof fields of aesthesis.

It is a different matter when in a receptive hour of my personal life a man meets me about whom there is something, which I cannot grasp in any objective way at all, that "says something" to me. That does not mean, says to me what manner of man this is, what is going on in him, and the like. But it means, says something to *me*, addresses something to me, speaks something that enters my own life. It can be something about this man, for instance that he needs me. But it can also be something about myself. The man himself in his relation to me has nothing to do with what is said. He has no relation to me, he has indeed not noticed me at all. It is not he who says it to me, as that solitary man silently confessed his secret to his neighbour on the seat; but *it* says it.

To understand "say" as a metaphor is not to understand. The phrase "that doesn't say a thing to me" is an outworn metaphor; but the saying I am referring to is real speech. In the house of speech are many mansions, and this is one of the inner.

The effect of having this said to me is completely different from that of looking on and observing. I cannot depict or denote or describe the man in whom, through whom, something has been said to me. Were I to attempt it, that would be the end of saying. This man is not my object; I have got to do with him. Perhaps I have to accomplish something about him; but perhaps I have only to learn something, and it is only a matter of my "accepting." It may be that I have no answer at once, to this very man before me; it may be that the saying has a long and manifold transmission before it, and that I am to answer some other person at some other time and place, in who knows what kind of speech, and that it is now only a matter of taking the answering on myself. But in each instance a word demanding an answer has happened to me.

We may term this way of perception *becoming aware*.

It by no means needs to be a man of whom I become aware. It can be an animal, a plant, a stone. No kind of appearance or event is fundamentally excluded from the series of the things through which from time to time something is said to me. Nothing can refuse to be the vessel for the Word. The limits of the possibility of dialogue are the limits of awareness.

Each of us is encased in an armour whose task is to ward off signs. Signs happen to us without respite, living means being addressed, we would need only to present ourselves and to perceive. But the risk is too dangerous for us, the soundless thunderings seem to threaten us with annihilation, and from generation to generation we perfect the defence apparatus. All our knowledge assures us, "Be calm, everything happens as it must happen, but nothing is directed at you, you are not meant; it is just 'the world,' you can experience it as you like, but whatever you make of it in yourself proceeds from you alone, nothing is required of you, you are not addressed, all is quiet."

#### THE SIGNS

Each of us is encased in an armour which we soon, out of familiarity, no longer notice. There are only moments which penetrate it and stir the soul to sensibility. And when such a moment has imposed itself on us and we then take notice and ask ourselves, "Has anything particular taken place? Was it not of the kind I meet every day?" then we may reply to ourselves, "Nothing particular, indeed, it is like this every day, only we are not there every day."

The signs of address are not something extraordinary, something that steps out of the order of things, they are just what goes on time and again, just what goes on in any case, nothing is added by the address. The waves of the aether roar on always, but for most of the time we have turned off our receivers.

What occurs to me addresses me. In what occurs to me the world-happening addresses me. Only by sterilizing it, removing the seed of address from it, can I take what occurs to me as a part of the world-happening which does not refer to me. The interlocking sterilized system into which all this only needs to be dovetailed is man's titanic work. Mankind has pressed speech too into the service of this work.

From out of this tower of the ages the objection will be levelled against me, if some of its doorkeepers should pay any attention to such trains of thought, that it is nothing but a variety of primitive superstition to hold that cosmic and telluric happenings have for the life of the human person a direct

meaning that can be grasped. For instead of understanding an event physically, biologically, sociologically (for which I, inclined as I always have been to admire genuine acts of research, think a great deal, when those who carry them out only know what they are doing and do not lose sight of the limits of the realm in which they are moving), these keepers say, an attempt is being made to get behind the event's alleged significance, and for this there is no place in a reasonable world continuum of space and time.

Thus, then, unexpectedly I seem to have fallen into the company of the augurs, of whom, as is well-known, there are remarkable modern varieties.

But whether they haruspicate or cast a horoscope their signs have this peculiarity that they are in a dictionary, even if not necessarily a written one. It does not matter how esoteric the information that is handed down: he who searches out the signs is *well up in* what life's juncture this or that sign means. Nor does it matter that special difficulties of separation and combination are created by the meeting of several signs of different kinds. For you can "look it up in the dictionary." The common signature of all this business is that it is for all time: things remain the same, they are discovered once for all, rules, laws, and analogical conclusions may be employed throughout. What is commonly termed superstition that is, perverse faith, appears to me rather as perverse knowledge. From "superstition" about the number 13 an unbroken ladder leads into the dizziest heights of gnosis. This is not even the aping of a real faith.

Real faith—if I may so term presenting ourselves and perceiving—begins when the dictionary is put down, when you are done with it. What occurs to me says something to me, but what it says to me cannot be revealed by any esoteric information; for it has never been said before nor is it composed of sounds that have ever been said. It can neither be interpreted nor translated, I can have it neither explained nor displayed; it is not a *what* at all, it is said into my very life; it is no experience that can be remembered independently of the situation, it remains the address of that moment and cannot be isolated, it remains the question of a questioner and will have its answer.

(It remains the question. For that is the other great contrast between all the business of interpreting signs and the speech of signs which I mean here: this speech never gives information or appeasement.)

Faith stands in the stream of "happening but once" which is spanned by knowledge. All the emergency structures of analogy and typology are indispensable for the work of the human spirit, but to step on them when the question of the questioner steps up to you, to me, would be running away. Lived life is tested and fulfilled in the stream alone.



With all deference to the world continuum of space and time I know as a living truth only concrete world reality which is constantly, in every moment, reached out to me. I can separate it into its component parts, I can compare them and distribute them into groups of similar phenomena, I can derive them from earlier and reduce them to simpler phenomena; and when I have done all this I have not touched my concrete world reality. Inseparable, incomparable, irreducible, now, happening once only, it gazes upon me with a horrifying look. So in Stravinsky's ballet the director of the wandering marionette show wants to point out to the people at the annual fair that a pierrot who terrified them is nothing but a wisp of straw in clothes: he tears it asunder—and collapses, gibbering, for on the roof of the booth the *living* Petrouchka sits and laughs at him.

The true name of concrete reality is the creation which is entrusted to me and to every man. In it the signs of address are given to us. . . .

#### WHO SPEAKS?

In the signs of life which happens to us we are addressed. Who speaks?

It would not avail us to give for reply the word "God," if we do not give it out of that decisive hour of personal existence when we had to forget everything we imagined we knew of God, when we dared to keep nothing handed down or learned or self-contrived, no shred of knowledge, and were plunged into the night.

When we rise out of it into the new life and there begin to receive the signs, what can we know of that which—of him who gives them to us? Only what we experience from time to time from the signs themselves. If we name the speaker of this speech God, then it is always the God of a moment, a moment God.

I will now use a *gauche* comparison, since I know no right one.

When we really understand a poem, all we know of the poet is what we learn of him in the poem—no biographical wisdom is of value for the pure understanding of what is to be understood: the *I* which approaches us is the subject of this single poem. But when we read other poems by the poet in the same true way their subjects combine in all their multiplicity, completing and confirming one another, to form the one polyphony of the person's existence.

In such a way, out of the givers of the signs, the speakers of the words in lived life, out of the moment Gods there arises for us with a single identity the Lord of the voice, the One. . . .

## RESPONSIBILITY

The idea of responsibility is to be brought back from the province of specialized ethics, of an "ought" that swings free in the air, into that of lived life. Genuine responsibility exists only where there is real responding.

Responding to what?

To what happens to one, to what is to be seen and heard and felt. Each concrete hour allotted to the person, with its content drawn from the world and from destiny, is speech for the man who is attentive. Attentive, for no more than that is needed in order to make a beginning with the reading of the signs that are given to you. For that very reason, as I have already indicated, the whole apparatus of our civilization is necessary to preserve men from this attentiveness and its consequences. For the attentive man would no longer, as his custom is, "master" the situation the very moment after it stepped up to him: it would be laid upon him to go up to and into it. Moreover, nothing that he believed he possessed as always available would help him, no knowledge and no technique, no system and no programme; for now he would have to do with what cannot be classified, with concretion itself. This speech has no alphabet, each of its sounds is a new creation and only to be grasped as such.

It will, then, be expected of the attentive man that he faces creation as it happens. It happens as speech, and not as speech rushing out over his head, but as speech directed precisely at him. And if one were to ask another if he too heard and he said he did, they would have agreed only about an experiencing and not about something experienced.

But the sounds of which the speech consists—I repeat it in order to remove the misunderstanding, which is perhaps still possible, that I referred to something extraordinary and larger than life—are the events of the personal everyday life. In them, as they now are, "great" or "small," we are addressed, and those which count as great, yield no greater signs than the others.

Our attitude, however, is not yet decided through our becoming aware of the signs. We can still wrap silence about us—a reply characteristic of a significant type of the age—or we can step aside into the accustomed way; although both times we carry away a wound that is not to be forgotten in any productivity or any narcotism. Yet it can happen that we venture to respond, stammering perhaps—the soul is but rarely able to attain to surer articulation—but it is an honest stammering, as when sense and throat are united about what is to be said, but the throat is too horrified at it to utter purely the already composed sense. The words of our response are spoken in

the speech, untranslatable like the address, of doing and letting—whereby the doing may behave like a letting and the letting like a doing. What we say in this way with the being is our entering upon the situation, into the situation, which has at this moment stepped up to us, whose appearance we did not and could not know, for its like has not yet been.

Nor are we now finished with it, we have to give up that expectation: a situation of which we have become aware is never finished with, but we subdue it into the substance of lived life. Only then, true to the moment, do we experience a life that is something other than a sum of moments. We respond to the moment, but at the same time we respond on its behalf, we answer for it. A newly-created concrete reality has been laid in our arms; we answer for it. A dog has looked at you, you answer for its glance, a child has clutched your hand, you answer for its touch, a host of men moves about you, you answer for their need.

#### MORALITY AND RELIGION

Responsibility which does not respond to a word is a metaphor of morality. Factually, responsibility only exists when the court is there to which I am responsible, and "self-responsibility" has reality only when the "self" to which I am responsible becomes transparent into the absolute. But he who practises real responsibility in the life of dialogue does not need to name the speaker of the word to which he is responding—he knows him in the word's substance which presses on and in, assuming the cadence of an inwardness, and stirs him in his heart of hearts. A man can ward off with all his strength the belief that "God" is there, and he tastes him in the strict sacrament of dialogue.

Yet let it not be supposed that I make morality questionable in order to glorify religion. Religion, certainly, has this advantage over morality, that it is a phenomenon and not a postulate, and further that it is able to include composure as well as determination. The reality of morality, the demand of the demander, has a place in religion, but the reality of religion, the unconditioned being of the demander, has no place in morality. Nevertheless, when religion does itself justice and asserts itself, it is much more dubious than morality, just because it is more actual and inclusive. Religion as risk, which is ready to give itself up, is the nourishing stream of the arteries; as system, possessing, assured and assuring, religion which believes in religion is the veins' blood, which ceases to circulate. And if there is nothing that can so hide the face of our fellow-man as morality can, religion can hide from us as nothing else can the face of God. Principle there, dogma here, I appreciate

the "objective" compactness of dogma, but behind both there lies in wait the—profane or holy—war against the situation's power of dialogue, there lies in wait the "once-for-all" which resists the unforeseeable moment. Dogma, even when its claim of origin remains uncontested, has become the most exalted form of invulnerability against revelation. Revelation will tolerate no perfect tense, but man with the arts of his craze for security props it up to perfectness.

## *Section II: Limitation*

### THE REALMS

The realms of the life of dialogue and the life of monologue do not coincide with the realms of dialogue and monologue even when forms without sound and even without gesture are included. There are not merely great spheres of the life of dialogue which in appearance are not dialogue, there is also dialogue which is not the dialogue of life, that is, it has the appearance but not the essence of dialogue. At times, indeed, it seems as though there were only this kind of dialogue.

I know three kinds. There is genuine dialogue—no matter whether spoken or silent—where each of the participants really has in mind the other or others in their present and particular being and turns to them with the intention of establishing a living mutual relation between himself and them. There is technical dialogue, which is prompted solely by the need of objective understanding. And there is monologue disguised as dialogue, in which two or more men, meeting in space, speak each with himself in strangely tortuous and circuitous ways and yet imagine they have escaped the torment of being thrown back on their own resources. The first kind, as I have said, has become rare; where it arises, in no matter how "unspiritual" a form, witness is borne on behalf of the continuance of the organic substance of the human spirit. The second belongs to the inalienable sterling quality of "modern existence." But real dialogue is here continually hidden in all kinds of odd corners and, occasionally in an unseemly way, breaks surface surprisingly and inopportunistly—certainly still oftener it is arrogantly tolerated than downright scandalizing—as in the tone of a railway guard's voice, in the glance of an old newspaper vendor, in the smile of the chimney-sweeper. And the third . . . [consists of such as the following:]

A *debate* in which the thoughts are not expressed in the way in which they existed in the mind but in the speaking are so pointed that they may strike home in the sharpest way, and moreover without the men that are spoken to



being regarded in any way present as persons; a *conversation* characterized by the need neither to communicate something, nor to learn something, nor to influence someone, nor to come into connexion with someone, but solely by the desire to have one's own self-reliance confirmed by marking the impression that is made, or if it has become unsteady to have it strengthened; a *friendly chat* in which each regards himself as absolute and legitimate and the other as relativized and questionable; a *lovers' talk* in which both partners alike enjoy their own glorious soul and their precious experience—what an underworld of faceless spectres of dialogue!

The life of dialogue is not one in which you have much to do with men, but one in which you really have to do with those with whom you have to do. It is not the solitary man who lives the life of monologue, but he who is incapable of making real in the context of being the community in which, in the context of his destiny, he moves. It is, in fact, solitude which is able to show the innermost nature of the contrast. He who is living the life of dialogue receives in the ordinary course of the hours something that is said and feels himself approached for an answer. But also in the vast blankness of, say, a companionless mountain wandering that which confronts him, rich in change, does not leave him. He who is living the life of monologue is never aware of the other as something that is absolutely not himself and at the same time something with which he nevertheless communicates. Solitude for him can mean mounting richness of visions and thoughts but never the deep intercourse, captured in a new depth, with the incomprehensibly real. Nature for him is either an *état d'âme*,<sup>1</sup> hence a "living through" in himself, or it is a passive object of knowledge, either idealistically brought within the soul or realistically alienated. It does not become for him a word apprehended with senses of beholding and feeling.

Being, lived in dialogue, receives even in extreme dereliction a harsh and strengthening sense of reciprocity; being, lived in monologue, will not, even in the tenderest intimacy, grope out over the outlines of the self.

This must not be confused with the contrast between "egoism" and "altruism" conceived by some moralists. I know people who are absorbed in "social activity" and have never spoken from being to being with a fellow-man. I know others who have no personal relation except to their enemies, but stand in such a relation to them that it is the enemies' fault if the relation does not flourish into one of dialogue.

Nor is dialogic to be identified with love. I know no one in any time who has succeeded in loving every man he met. Even Jesus obviously loved of

<sup>1</sup> [*State of soul.*]

"sinners" only the loose, lovable sinners, sinners against the Law; not those who were settled and loyal to their inheritance and sinned against him and his message. Yet to the latter as to the former he stood in a direct relation. Dialogic is not to be identified with love. But love without dialogic, without real outgoing to the other, reaching to the other, and companying with the other, the love remaining with itself—this is called Lucifer.

Certainly in order to be able to go out to the other you must have the starting place, you must have been, you must be, with yourself. Dialogue between mere individuals is only a sketch, only in dialogue between persons is the sketch filled in. But by what could a man from being an individual so really become a person as by the strict and sweet experiences of dialogue which teach him the boundless contents of the boundary?

What is said here is the real contrary of the cry, heard at times in twilight ages, for universal unreserve. He who can be unreserved with each passer-by has no substance to lose; but he who cannot stand in a direct relation to each one who meets him has a fulness which is futile. Luther is wrong to change the Hebrew "companion" (out of which the Seventy had already made one who is near, a neighbour) into "nearest." If everything concrete is equally near, equally nearest, life with the world ceases to have articulation and structure, it ceases to have human meaning. But nothing needs to mediate between me and one of my companions in the companionship of creation, whenever we come near one another, because we are bound up in relation to the same centre.

#### THE BASIC MOVEMENTS

I term basic movement an essential action of man (it may be understood as an "inner" action, but it is not there unless it is there to the very tension of the eyes' muscles and the very action of the foot as it walks), round which an essential attitude is built up. I do not think of this happening in time, as though the single action preceded the lasting attitude; the latter rather has its truth in the accomplishing, over and over again, of the basic movement, without forethought but also without habit. Otherwise the attitude would have only aesthetic or perhaps also political significance, as a beautiful and as an effective lie. The familiar maxim, "An attitude must first be adopted, the rest follows of itself" ceases to be true in the circle of essential action and essential attitude—that is, where we are concerned with the wholeness of the person.

The basic movement of the life of dialogue is the turning towards the other. That, indeed, seems to happen every hour and quite trivially. If you

look at someone and address him you turn to him, of course with the body, but also in the requisite measure with the soul, in that you direct your attention to him. But what of all this is an essential action, done with the essential being? In this way, that out of the incomprehensibility of what lies to hand this one person steps forth and becomes a presence. Now to our perception the world ceases to be an insignificant multiplicity of points to one of which we pay momentary attention. Rather it is a limitless tumult round a narrow breakwater, brightly outlined and able to bear heavy loads—limitless, but limited by the breakwater, so that, though not engirdled, it has become finite in itself, been given form, released from its own indifference. And yet none of the contacts of each hour is unworthy to take up from our essential being as much as it may. For no man is without strength for expression, and our turning towards him brings about a reply, however imperceptible, however quickly smothered, in a looking and sounding forth of the soul that are perhaps dissipating in mere inwardness and yet do exist. The notion of modern man that this turning to the other is sentimental and does not correspond to the compression of life today is a grotesque error, just as his affirmation that turning to the other is impractical in the bustle of this life today is only the masked confession of his weakness of initiative when confronted with the state of the time. He lets it dictate to him what is possible or permissible, instead of stipulating, as an unruffled partner, what is to be stipulated to the state of *every* time, namely, what space and what form it is bound to concede to creaturely existence.

The basic movement of the life of monologue is not turning away as opposed to turning towards; it is "reflexion."

When I was eleven years of age, spending the summer on my grandparents' estate, I used, as often as I could do it unobserved, to steal into the stable and gently stroke the neck of my darling, a broad dapple-grey horse. It was not a casual delight but a great, certainly friendly, but also deeply stirring happening. If I am to explain it now, beginning from the still very fresh memory of my hand, I must say that what I experienced in touch with the animal was the Other, the immense otherness of the Other, which, however, did not remain strange like the otherness of the ox and the ram, but rather let me draw near and touch it. When I stroked the mighty mane, sometimes marvellously smooth-combed, at other times just as astonishingly wild, and felt the life beneath my hand, it was as though the element of vitality itself bordered on my skin, something that was not I, was certainly not akin to me, palpably the other, not just another, really the Other itself; and yet it let me approach, confided itself to me, placed itself elementally

in the relation of *Thou* and *Thou* with me. The horse, even when I had not begun by pouring oats for him into the manger, very gently raised his massive head, ears flicking, then snorted quietly, as a conspirator gives a signal meant to be recognizable only by his fellow-conspirator; and I was approved. But once—I do not know what came over the child, at any rate it was child-like enough—it struck me about the stroking, what fun it gave me, and suddenly I became conscious of my hand. The game went on as before, but something had changed, it was no longer the same thing. And the next day, after giving him a rich feed, when I stroked my friend's head he did not raise his head. A few years later, when I thought back to the incident, I no longer supposed that the animal had noticed my defection. But at the time I considered myself judged.

Reflexion is something different from egoism and even from "egotism." It is not that a man is concerned with himself, considers himself, fingers himself, enjoys, idolizes and bemoans himself; all that can be added, but it is not integral to reflexion. (Similarly, to the turning towards the other, completing it, there can be added the realizing of the other in his particular existence, even the encompassing of him, so that the situations common to him and oneself are experienced also from his, the other's end.) I term it reflexion when a man withdraws from accepting with his essential being another person in his particularity—a particularity which is by no means to be circumscribed by the circle of his own self, and though it substantially touches and moves his soul is in no way immanent in it—and lets the other exist only as his own experience, only as a "part of myself." For then dialogue becomes a fiction, the mysterious intercourse between two human worlds only a game, and in the rejection of the real life confronting him the essence of all reality begins to disintegrate. . . .

#### OF THINKING

To all unprejudiced reflection it is clear that all *art* is from its origin essentially of the nature of dialogue. All music calls to an ear not the musician's own, all sculpture to an eye not the sculptor's, architecture in addition calls to the step as it walks in the building. They all say, to him who receives them, something (not a "feeling" but a perceived mystery) that can be said only in this one language. But there seems to cling to *thought* something of the life of monologue to which communication takes a second, secondary place. Thought seems to arise in monologue. Is it so? Is there here—where, as the philosophers say, pure subject separates itself from the concrete person in order to establish and stabilize a world for itself—a citadel which rises



towering over the life of dialogue, inaccessible to it, in which man-with-himself, the single one, suffers and triumphs in glorious solitude?

Plato has repeatedly called thinking a voiceless colloquy of the soul with itself. Everyone who has really thought knows that within this remarkable process there is a stage at which an "inner" court is questioned and replies. But that is not the arising of the thought but the first trying and testing of what has arisen. The arising of the thought does not take place in colloquy with oneself. The character of monologue does not belong to the insight into a basic relation with which cognitive thought begins; nor to the grasping, limiting and compressing of the insight; nor to its moulding into the independent conceptual form; nor to the reception of this form, with the bestowal of relations, the dovetailing and soldering, into an order of conceptual forms; nor, finally, to the expression and clarification in language (which till now had only a technical and reserved symbolic function). Rather are elements of dialogue to be discovered here. It is not himself that the thinker addresses in the stages of the thought's growth, in their answerings, but as it were the basic relation in face of which he has to answer for his insight, or the order in face of which he has to answer for the newly arrived conceptual form. And it is a misunderstanding of the dynamic of the event of thought to suppose that these apostrophizings of a being existing in nature or in ideas are "really" colloquies with the self.

But also the first trying and testing of the thought, when it is provisionally completed, before the "inner" court, in the platonic sense the stage of monologue, has besides the familiar form of its appearance another form in which dialogue plays a great part, well-known to Plato if to anyone. There he who is approached for judgment is not the empirical self but the *genius*, the spirit I am intended to become, the image-self, before which the new thought is borne for approval, that is, for taking up into its own consummating thinking.

And now from another dimension which even this lease of power does not satisfy there appears the longing for a trying and testing in the sphere of pure dialogue. Here the function of receiving is no longer given over to the *Thou-I* but to a genuine *Thou* which either remains one that is thought and yet is felt as supremely living and "other," or else is embodied in an intimate person. "Man," says Wilhelm von Humboldt in his significant treatise on *The Dual Number* (1827), "longs even for the sake of his mere thinking for a *Thou* corresponding to the *I*. The conception appears to him to reach its definiteness and certainly only when it reflects from another power of thought. It is produced by being torn away from the moving mass

of representation and shaped in face of the subject into the object. But the objectivity appears in a still more complete form if this separation does not go on in the subject alone, if he really sees the thought outside himself; and this is possible only in another being, representing and thinking like himself. And between one power of thought and another there is no other mediator but speech." This reference, simplified to an aphorism, recurs with Ludwig Feuerbach in 1843: "True dialectic is not a monologue of the solitary thinker with himself, it is a dialogue between *I* and *Thou*."

But this saying points beyond that "reflecting" to the fact that even in the original stage of the proper act of thought the inner action might take place in relation to a genuine and not merely an "inward" (Novalis) *Thou*. And where modern philosophy is most earnest in the desire to ask its questions on the basis of human existence, situation and present, in some modifications an important further step is taken. Here it is certainly no longer just that the *Thou* is ready to receive and disposed to philosophize along with the *I*. Rather, and preeminently, we have the *Thou* in opposition because we truly have the other who thinks other things in another way. So, too, it is not a matter of a game of draughts in the tower of a castle in the air, but of the binding business of life on the hard earth, in which one is inexorably aware of the otherness of the other but does not at all contest it without realizing it; one takes up its nature into one's own thinking, thinks in relation to it, addresses it in thought.

This man of modern philosophy, however, who in this way no longer thinks in the untouchable province of pure ideation, but thinks in reality—does he think in reality? Not solely in a reality framed by thought? Is the other, whom he accepts and receives in this way, not solely the other framed by thought, and therefore unreal? Does the thinker of whom we are speaking hold his own with the bodily fact of otherness?

If we are serious about thinking between *I* and *Thou* then it is not enough to cast our thoughts towards the other subject of thought framed by thought. We should also, with the thinking, precisely with the thinking, live towards the other man, who is not framed by thought but bodily present before us; we should live towards his concrete life. We should live not towards another thinker of whom we wish to know nothing beyond his thinking but, even if the other is a thinker, towards his bodily life over and above his thinking—rather, towards his person, to which, to be sure, the activity of thinking also belongs.

When will the action of thinking endure, include, and refer to the presence of the living man facing us? When will the dialectic of thought become

dialogic, an unsentimental, unrelaxed dialogue in the strict terms of thought with the man present at the moment? . . .

#### COMMUNITY

In the view customary to-day, which is defined by politics, the only important thing in groups, in the present as in history, is what they aim at and what they accomplish. Significance is ascribed to what goes on within them only in so far as it influences the group's action with regard to its aim. Thus it is conceded to a band conspiring to conquer the state power that the comradeship which fills it is of value, just because it strengthens the band's reliable assault power. Precise obedience will do as well, if enthusiastic drill makes up for the associates remaining strangers to one another; there are indeed good grounds for preferring the rigid system. If the group is striving even to reach a higher form of society then it can seem dangerous if in the life of the group itself something of this higher form begins to be realized in embryo. For from such a premature seriousness a suppression of the "effective" impetus is feared. The opinion apparently is that the man who whiles away his time as a guest on an oasis may be accounted lost for the project of irrigating the Sahara.

By this simplified mode of valuation the real and individual worth of a group remains as uncomprehended as when we judge a person by his effect alone and not by his qualities. The perversion of thought grows when chatter is added about sacrifice of being, about renunciation of self-realization, where possible with a reference to the favourite metaphor of the dung. Happiness, possession, power, authority, life can be renounced, but sacrifice of being is a sublime absurdity. And no moment, if it has to vouch for its relation to reality, can call upon any kind of later, future moments for whose sake, in order to make them fat, it has remained so lean.

The feeling of community does not reign where the desired change of institutions is wrested in common, but without community, from a resisting world. It reigns where the fight that is fought takes place from the position of a community struggling for its own reality as a community. But the future too is decided here at the same time; all political "achievements" are at best auxiliary troops to the effect which changes the very core, and which is wrought on the unsurveyable ways of secret history by the moment of realization. No way leads to any other goal but to that which is like it.

But who in all these massed, mingled, marching collectivities still perceives what that is for which he supposes he is striving—what community is? They have all surrendered to its counterpart. Collectivity is not a binding but a

bundling together: individuals packed together, armed and equipped in common, with only as much life from man to man as will inflame the marching step. But community, growing community (which is all we have known so far) is the being no longer side by side but *with* one another of a multitude of persons. And this multitude, though it also moves towards one goal, yet experiences everywhere a turning to, a dynamic facing of, the other, a flowing from *I* to *Thou*. Community is where community happens. Collectivity is based on an organized atrophy of personal existence, community on its increase and confirmation in life lived towards one other. The modern zeal for collectivity is a flight from community's testing and consecration of the person, a flight from the vital dialogic, demanding the staking of the self, which is in the heart of the world.

The men of the "collective" look down superciliously on the "sentimentality" of the generation before them, of the age of the "youth movement." Then the concern, wide-ranging and deeply-pondered, was with the problem of all life's relations, "community" was aimed at and made a problem at the same time. They went round in circles and never left the mark. But now there is commanding and marching, for now there is the "cause." The false paths of subjectivity have been left behind and the road of objectivism, going straight for its goal, has been reached. But as there existed a pseudo-subjectivity with the former, since the elementary force of being a subject was lacking, so with the latter there exists a pseudo-objectivism, since one is here fitted not into a world but into a worldless faction. As in the former all songs in praise of freedom were sung into the void, because only freeing from bonds was known, but not freeing to responsibility, so in the latter even the noblest hymns on authority are a misunderstanding. For in fact they strengthen only the semblance of authority which has been won by speeches and cries; behind this authority is hidden an absence of consistency draped in the mighty folds of the attitude. But genuine authority, celebrated in those hymns, the authority of the genuine charismatic in his steady response to the lord of Charis, has remained unknown to the political sphere of the present. Superficially the two generations are different in kind to the extent of contradiction, in truth they are stuck in the same chaotic condition. The man of the youth movement, pondering his problems, was concerned (whatever the particular matter at different times) with his very own share in it, he "experienced" his *I* without pledging a self—in order not to have to pledge a self in response and responsibility. The man of the collective undertaking, striding to action, succeeded beforehand in getting rid of himself and thus radically escaping the question of pledging a self. Progress is



nevertheless to be recorded. With the former monologue presented itself as dialogue. With the latter it is considerably simpler, for the life of monologue is by their desire driven out from most men, or they are broken of the habit; and the others, who give the orders, have at least no need to feign any dialogic.

Dialogue and monologue are silenced. Bundled together, men march without *Thou* and without *I*, those of the left who want to abolish memory, and those of the right who want to regulate it: hostile and separated hosts, they march into the common abyss.

### *Section III: Confirmation*

#### CONVERSATION WITH THE OPPONENT

I hope for two kinds of readers for these thoughts: for the *amicus*<sup>2</sup> who knows about the reality to which I am pointing with a finger I should like to be able to stretch out like Grünewald's Baptist; and for the *hostis* or *adversarius*<sup>3</sup> who denies this reality and therefore contends with me, because I point to it (in his view misleadingly) as to a reality. Thus he takes what is said here just as seriously as I myself do, after long waiting writing what is to be written—just as seriously, only with the negative sign. The mere *inimicus*,<sup>4</sup> as which I regard everyone who wishes to relegate me to the realm of ideology and there let my thoughts count, I would gladly dispense with.

I need say nothing at this point to the *amicus*. The hour of common mortality and the common way strikes in his and in my ears as though we stood even in the same place with one another and knew one another.

But it is not enough to tell the *adversarius* here what I am pointing at—the hiddenness of his personal life, his secret, and that, stepping over a carefully avoided threshold, he will discover what he denies. It is not enough. I dare not turn aside his gravest objection. I must accept it, as and where it is raised, and must answer.

So now the *adversarius* sits, facing me in his actual form as he appears in accordance with the spirit of the time, and speaks, more above and beyond me than towards and to me, in accents and attitude customary in the universal duel, free of personal relation.

"In all this the actuality of our present life, the conditioned nature of life

<sup>2</sup> {*Friend.*}

<sup>3</sup> {*Enemy or adversary.*}

<sup>4</sup> {*Unfriendly one.*}

as a whole, is not taken into account. All that you speak of takes place in the never-never-land, not in the social context of the world in which we spend our days, and by which if by anything our reality is defined. Your 'two men' sit on a solitary seat, obviously during a holiday journey. In a big city office you would not be able to let them sit, they would not reach the 'sacramental' there. Your 'interrupted conversation' takes place between intellectuals who have leisure a couple of months before the huge mass event to spin fantasies of its prevention through a spiritual influence. That may be quite interesting for people who are not taken up with any duty. But is the business employee to 'communicate himself without reserve' to his colleagues? Is the worker at the conveyor belt to 'feel himself addressed in what he experiences'? Is the leader of a gigantic technical undertaking to 'practise the responsibility of dialogue'? You demand that we enter into the situation which approaches us, and you neglect the enduring situation in which everyone of us, so far as we share in the life of community, is elementally placed. In spite of all references to concreteness, all that is pre-war individualism in a revised edition."

And I, out of a deep consciousness of how almost impossible it is to think in common, if only in opposition, where there is no common experience, reply.

Before all, dear opponent, if we are to converse with one another and not at and past one another, I beg you to notice that I do not demand. I have no call to that and no authority for it. I try only to say that there is something, and to indicate how it is made: I simply record. And how could the life of dialogue be demanded? There is no ordering of dialogue. It is not that you *are* to answer but that you *are able*.

You are really able. The life of dialogue is no privilege of intellectual activity like dialectic. It does not begin in the upper story of humanity. It begins no higher than where humanity begins. There are no gifted and ungifted here, only those who give themselves and those who withhold themselves. And he who gives himself to-morrow is not noted to-day, even he himself does not know that he has it in himself, and that we have it in ourselves, he will just find it, "and finding be amazed."

You put before me that man taken up with duty and business. Yes, precisely him I mean, him in the factory, in the shop, in the office, in the mine, on the tractor, at the printing-press: man. I do not seek for men. I do not seek men out for myself, I accept those who are there, I have them, I have him, in mind, the yoked, the wheel-treading, the conditioned. Dialogue is not an affair of spiritual luxury and spiritual luxuriousness, it is a matter of

creation, of the creature, and he is that, the man of whom I speak, he is a creature, trivial and irreplaceable.

In my thoughts about the life of dialogue I have had to choose the examples as "purely" and as much in the form of paradigm as memory presented them to me in order to make myself intelligible about what has become so unfamiliar, in fact so sunk in oblivion. For this reason I appear to draw my tales from the province which you term the "intellectual," in reality only from the province where things succeed, are rounded off, in fact are exemplary. But I am not concerned with the pure; I am concerned with the turbid, the repressed, the pedestrian, with toil and dull contrariness—and with the break-through. With the break-through and not with a perfection, and moreover with the break-through not out of despair with its murderous and renewing powers; no, not with the great catastrophic break-through which happens once for all (it is fitting to be silent for a while about that, even in one's own heart), but with the breaking through from the status of the dully-tempered disagreeableness, obstinacy, and contrariness in which the man, whom I pluck at random out of the tumult, is living and out of which he can and at times does break through.

Whither? Into nothing exalted, heroic or holy, into no Either and no Or, only into this tiny strictness and grace of every day, where I have to do with just the very same "reality" with whose duty and business I am taken up in such a way, glance to glance, look to look, word to word, that I experience it as reached to me and myself to it, it as spoken to me and myself to it. And now, in all the clanking of routine that I called my reality, there appears to me, homely and glorious, the effective reality, creaturely and given to me in trust and responsibility. We do not find meaning lying in things nor do we put it into things, but between us and things it can happen.

It is not sufficient, dear opponent, first of all to ascribe to me the pathos of "all or nothing" and then to prove the impossibility of my alleged demand. I know neither what all nor what nothing is, the one appears to me to be as inhuman and contrived as the other. What I am meaning is the simple *quantum satis*<sup>5</sup> of that which this man in this hour of his life is able to fulfil and to receive—if he gives himself. That is, if he does not let himself be deceived by the compact plausibility that there are places excluded from creation, that he works in such a place and is able to return to creation when his shift is over; or that creation is outstripped, that it once was but is irrevocably over, now there is business and now it is a case of stripping off all

<sup>5</sup> [Enough to satisfy.]

romanticism, gritting the teeth and getting through with what is recognized as necessary. I say—if he does not let himself be deceived.

No factory and no office is so abandoned by creation that a creative glance could not fly up from one working-place to another, from desk to desk, a sober and brotherly glance which guarantees the reality of creation which is happening—*quantum satis*. And nothing is so valuable a service of dialogue between God and man as such an unsentimental and unreserved exchange of glances between two men in an alien place.

But is it irrevocably an alien place? Must henceforth, through all the world's ages, the life of the being which is yoked to business be divided in two, into alien "work" and home "recovery"? More, since evenings and Sundays cannot be freed of the workday character but are unavoidably stamped with it, must such a life be divided out between the business of work and the business of recovery without a remainder of directness, of unregulated surplus—of freedom? (And the freedom I mean is established by no new order of society.)

Or does there already stir, beneath all dissatisfactions that can be satisfied, an unknown and primal and deep dissatisfaction for which there is as yet no recipe of satisfaction anywhere, but which will grow to such mightiness that it dictates to the technical leaders, the promoters, the inventors, and says, "Go on with your rationalizing, but humanize the rationalizing *ratio* in yourselves. Let it introduce the living man into its purposes and its calculations, him who longs to stand in a mutual relation with the world." Dear opponent, does the longing already stir in the depths—an impulse to great construction or a tiny spark of the last revolution—to fill business with the life of dialogue? That is, in the formulation of the *quantum satis*, the longing for an order of work in which business is so continually soaked in vital dialogic as the tasks to be fulfilled by it allow? And of the extent to which they can allow it there is scarcely an inkling to-day, in an hour when the question which I put is at the mercy of the fanatics, blind to reality, who conform to the time, and of the heralds, blind to possibility, of the impervious tragedy of the world.

Be clear what it means when a worker can experience even his relation to the machine as one of dialogue, when, for instance, a compositor tells that he has understood the machine's humming as "a merry and grateful smile at me for helping it to set aside the difficulties and obstructions which disturbed and bruised and pained it, so that now it could run free." Must even you not think then of the story of Androclus and the Lion?



But when a man draws a lifeless thing into his passionate longing for dialogue, lending it independence and as it were a soul, then there may dawn in him the presentiment of a world-wide dialogue, a dialogue with the world-happening that steps up to him even in his environment, which consists partly of things. Or do you seriously think that the giving and taking of signs halts on the threshold of that business where an honest and open spirit is found?

You ask with a laugh, can the leader of a great technical undertaking practise the responsibility of dialogue? He can. For he practises it when he makes present to himself in its concreteness, so far as he can, *quantum satis*, the business which he leads. He practises it when he experiences it, instead of as a structure of mechanical centres of force and their organic servants (among which latter there is for him no differentiation but the functional one), as an association of persons with faces and names and biographies, bound together by a work that is represented by, but does not consist of, the achievements of a complicated mechanism. He practises it when he is inwardly aware, with a latent and disciplined fantasy, of the multitude of these persons, whom naturally he cannot separately know and remember as such; so that now, when one of them for some reason or other steps really as an individual into the circle of his vision and the realm of his decision, he is aware of him without strain not as a number with a human mask but as a person. He practises it when he comprehends and handles these persons as persons—for the greatest part necessarily indirectly, by means of a system of mediation which varies according to the extent, nature and structure of the undertaking, but also directly, in the parts which concern him by way of organization. Naturally at first both camps, that of capital and that of the proletariat, will decry his masterly attitude of fantasy as fantastic nonsense and his practical attitude to persons as dilettantist. But just as naturally only until his increased figures of production accredit him in their eyes. (By this of course is not to be implied that those increases necessarily come to pass: between truth and success there is no pre-stabilized harmony.) Then, to be sure, something worse will follow. He will be pragmatically imitated, that is, people will try to use his "procedure" without his way of thinking and imagining. But this demonic element inherent in spiritual history (think only of all the magicizing of religion) will, I think, shipwreck here on the power of discrimination in men's souls. And meanwhile it is to be hoped that a new generation will arise, learning from what is alive, and will take all this in real seriousness as he does.

Unmistakably men are more and more determined by "circumstances."

Not only the absolute mass but also the relative might of social objectives is growing. As one determined partially by them the individual stands in each moment before concrete reality which wishes to reach out to him and receive an answer from him; laden with the situation he meets new situations. And yet in all the multiplicity and complexity he has remained Adam. Even now a real decision is made in him, whether he faces the speech of God articulated to him in things and events—or escapes. And a creative glance towards his fellow-creature can at times suffice for response.

Man is in a growing measure sociologically determined. But this growing is the maturing of a task not in the “ought” but in the “may” and in “need,” in longing and in grace. It is a matter of renouncing the pantechanical mania or habit with its easy “mastery” of every situation; of taking everything up into the might of dialogue of the genuine life, from the trivial mysteries of everyday to the majesty of destructive destiny.

The task becomes more and more difficult, and more and more essential, the fulfilment more and more impeded and more and more rich in decision. All the regulated chaos of the age waits for the break-through, and wherever a man perceives and responds, he is working to that end.



# SELF, PERSON, AND SOCIETY

## 3. INDIVIDUAL FULFILLMENT AND SOCIAL COMPULSION





## SIGMUND FREUD

ONE of the major functions of the intellectual life of Western civilization has been to interpret and criticize our social habits and institutions. With the development of modern science and the changing destinies of political and economic individualism, from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to the present, we have had a variety of decisive inquiries into the relation between man and his social environment. One of the most persistent issues has been the determination of how man can satisfactorily realize his status both as individual and as social creature. We find, for example, both Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and Sigmund Freud concerned with the character and consequences of the coexistence of seemingly diverse and conflicting values for human existence. Thus both men recognize that the demands for self-survival, rooted within the individual, are confronted with the often contrasting aims of the community to perpetuate itself. Do men, therefore, organize societies because of their inherent weaknesses? Is it a necessary evil for man to appeal to directives for his action which are shaped by traditions and forces beyond himself and often in conflict with his own hopes and desires? And what is the price we pay for this legal and moral affiliation with our social world?

For Hobbes the *raison d'être* of social organization as well as of self-survival for the individual was implicit in the meaning of *social contract*. For Freud this two-edged sword was to be discovered in the process of *civilization* itself. However, Freud's particular psychological orientation made him aware that the tensions and antagonisms between man and his civilization were to be found within the fabric of the human self. In the course of his work Freud came to regard the life of man as eternally committed to struggle and frustration as well as to contentment and pleasure. As a biological creature, man is a compound of yearnings and wants which express simply his animal needs for survival. But man, as *human*, cannot sustain his complex existence exclusively in these animal terms. Thus he must become situated within the framework of values created by his social environment which, although coercive and repressive with respect to his underlying drives, promises survival to the social group. But the peculiarity of the human psyche is such that these forces are mirrored within it as antagonistic though complementary functions. And the essential dilemma of man is that, being human, his self must endure as the battleground between the forces of his biological inheritance and those of his social achievements.

Freud felt that all men are confronted with the primary problem of meeting or mitigating the suffering that arises from this dilemma. Some men seek intoxication, whether alcoholic, narcotic, or of some other kind, to "drown their cares." Others attempt to annihilate their instincts by some form of discipline, as taught by Oriental wisdom and as practiced by the Yogi. Still others achieve release either through "substitution" of an illusion for reality or through "sublimation" of the instincts in a direction which does not require their direct gratification. Among the

outstanding forms of sublimation or "libido-displacement" are artistic and scientific endeavor, a recourse available to the few. The artist "embodies his phantasies" in outward form; the scientist channels his energy into the solution of abstract problems. Religion is regarded by Freud as one type of substitute which takes a social form, and which perpetuates mental infantilism by replacing the craving for fatherly protection with the universal fatherhood of God, yielding shelter from all the responsibilities of growing up. Those who are unable to adopt substitutes like religion are left with a resort which is itself a substitution—"the flight into neurotic illness."

These speculations of Freud, during the later part of his life, reflected his growing interest in the cultural dimensions of man's existence. Anthropology, classical and modern literature, and German romantic philosophy were important sources in the evolution of his thought. But the broadening scope of his work was in great measure a result of the elaboration of his own concepts and theories. Thus the forces of *Eros* and *Death* are more inclusive and suggestive than the meanings assigned to the "sexual" and "hunger" drives in Freud's earlier work. And it is not in spite of but because of these qualities of boldness and flexibility that Freud's contributions have a significant place in our contemporary intellectual world.

The following selection has been taken from Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents*, which first appeared in German in 1930. The present translation is by Joan Riviere.



## CIVILIZATION AND ITS DISCONTENTS

### Part II

The question, "What is the purpose of human life?" has been asked times without number; it has never received a satisfactory answer; perhaps it does not admit of such an answer. Many a questioner has added that if it should appear that life has no purpose, then it would lose all value for him. But these threats alter nothing. It looks, on the contrary, as though one had a right to dismiss this question, for it seems to presuppose that belief in the superiority of the human race with which we are already so familiar in its other expressions. Nobody asks what is the purpose of the lives of animals, unless peradventure they are designed to be of service to man. But this, too, will not hold, for with many animals man can do nothing—except describe, classify and study them; and countless species have declined to be put even

---

This selection has been reprinted from Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (pp. 26-28, 43-44, 49-50, 57-58, 58-61, 79-82, 86-89, 91-93, 94-95, 97-98, 101-103, 104-105, 111-112, 113-114, 117-118, 121-122, 123-124, 125-126, 132, 133-136, 138-140, 143-144, Copyright, 1930 by The Hogarth Press, Ltd., London) by permission of the publisher.

to this use, by living and dying and becoming extinct before men had set eyes upon them. So again, only religion is able to answer the question of the purpose of life. One can hardly go wrong in concluding that the idea of a purpose in life stands and falls with the religious system.

We will turn, therefore, to the less ambitious problem, what the behaviour of men themselves reveals as the purpose and object of their lives, what they demand of life and wish to attain in it. The answer to this can hardly be in doubt: they seek happiness, they want to become happy and to remain so. There are two sides to this striving, a positive and a negative; it aims on the one hand at eliminating pain and discomfort, on the other at the experience of intense pleasures. In its narrower sense the word "happiness" relates only to the last. Thus human activities branch off in two directions—corresponding to this double goal—according to which of the two they aim at realizing, either predominantly or even exclusively.

As we see, it is simply the pleasure-principle which draws up the programme of life's purpose. This principle dominates the operation of the mental apparatus from the very beginning; there can be no doubt about its efficiency, and yet its programme is in conflict with the whole world, with the macrocosm as much as with the microcosm. It simply cannot be put into execution, the whole constitution of things runs counter to it; one might say the intention that man should be "happy" is not included in the scheme of "Creation." What is called happiness in its narrowest sense comes from the satisfaction—most often instantaneous—of pent-up needs which have reached great intensity, and by its very nature can only be a transitory experience. When any condition desired by the pleasure-principle is protracted, it results in a feeling only of mild comfort; we are so constituted that we can only intensely enjoy contrast, much less intensely states in themselves. Our possibilities of happiness are thus limited from the start by our very constitution. It is much less difficult to be unhappy. Suffering comes from three quarters: from our own body, which is destined to decay and dissolution, and cannot even dispense with anxiety and pain as danger-signals; from the outer world, which can rage against us with the most powerful and pitiless forces of destruction; and finally from our relations with other men. . . .

### *Part III*

In regard to the first two, our judgement cannot hesitate: it forces us to recognize these sources of suffering and to submit to the inevitable. We shall



never completely subdue nature; our body, too, is an organism, itself a part of nature, and will always contain the seeds of dissolution, with its limited powers of adaptation and achievement. The effect of this recognition is in no way disheartening; on the contrary, it points out the direction for our efforts. If we cannot abolish all suffering, yet a great deal of it we can, and can mitigate more; the experience of several thousand years has convinced us of this. To the third, the social source of our distresses, we take up a different attitude. We prefer not to regard it as one at all; we cannot see why the systems we have ourselves created should not rather ensure protection and well-being for us all. To be sure, when we consider how unsuccessful our efforts to safeguard against suffering in this particular have proved, the suspicion dawns upon us that a bit of unconquerable nature lurks concealed behind this difficulty as well—in the shape of our own mental constitution.

When we start to consider this possibility, we come across a point of view which is so amazing that we will pause over it. According to it, our so-called civilization itself is to blame for a great part of our misery, and we should be much happier if we were to give it up and go back to primitive conditions. I call this amazing, because—however one may define culture—it is undeniable that every means by which we try to guard ourselves against menaces from the several sources of human distress is a part of this same culture. . . .

We will be content to repeat that the word "culture" described the sum of the achievements and institutions which differentiate our lives from those of our animal forebears and serve two purposes, namely, that of protecting humanity against nature and of regulating the relations of human beings among themselves. . . .

According to general opinion, however, there is one feature of culture which characterizes it better than any other, and that is the value it sets upon the higher mental activities—intellectual, scientific and aesthetic achievement—the leading part it concedes to ideas in human life. First and foremost among these ideas come the religious systems with their complicated evolution, on which I have elsewhere endeavoured to throw a light; next to them come philosophical speculations; and last, the ideals man has formed, his conceptions of the perfection possible in an individual, in a people, in humanity as a whole, and the demands he makes on the basis of these conceptions. These creations of his mind are not independent of each other; on the contrary, they are closely interwoven, and this complicates the attempt to describe them, as well as that to trace their psychological derivation. If we

assume as a general hypothesis that the force behind all human activities is a striving towards the two convergent aims of profit and pleasure, we must then acknowledge this as valid also for these other manifestations of culture, although it can be plainly recognized as true only in respect of science and art. . . .

We now have to consider the last, and certainly by no means the least important, of the components of culture, namely, the ways in which social relations, the relations of one man to another, are regulated, all that has to do with him as a neighbour, a source of help, a sexual object to others, a member of a family or of a state. It is especially difficult in this matter to remain unbiased by any ideal standards and to ascertain exactly what is specifically cultural here. Perhaps one might begin with the statement that the first attempt ever made to regulate these social relations already contained the essential element of civilization. Had no such attempt been made, these relations would be subject to the wills of individuals: that is to say, the man who was physically strongest would decide things in accordance with his own interests and desires. The situation would remain the same even though this strong man should in his turn meet with another who was stronger than he. Human life in communities only becomes possible when a number of men unite together in strength superior to any single individual and remain united against all single individuals. The strength of this united body is then opposed as "Right" against the strength of any individual, which is condemned as "brute force." This substitution of the power of a united number for the power of a single man is the decisive step towards civilization. The essence of it lies in the circumstance that the members of the community have restricted their possibilities of gratification, whereas the individual recognized no such restrictions. The first requisite of culture, therefore, is justice—that is, the assurance that a law once made will not be broken in favour of any individual. This implies nothing about the ethical value of any such law. The further course of cultural development seems to tend towards ensuring that the laws shall no longer represent the will of any small body—caste, tribe, section of the population—which may behave like a predatory individual towards other such groups perhaps containing larger numbers. The end-result would be a state of law to which all—that is, all who are capable of uniting—have contributed by making some sacrifice of their own desires, and which leaves none—again with the same exception—at the mercy of brute force.

The liberty of the individual is not a benefit of culture. It was greatest

before any culture, though indeed it had little value at that time, because the individual was hardly in a position to defend it. Liberty has undergone restrictions through the evolution of civilization, and justice demands that these restrictions shall apply to all. The desire for freedom that makes itself felt in a human community may be a revolt against some existing injustice and so may prove favourable to a further development of civilization and remain compatible with it. But it may also have its origin in the primitive roots of the personality, still unfettered by civilizing influences, and so become a source of antagonism to culture. Thus the cry for freedom is directed either against particular forms or demands of culture or else against culture itself. It does not seem as if man could be brought by any sort of influence to change his nature into that of the ants; he will always, one imagines, defend his claim to individual freedom against the will of the multitude. A great part of the struggles of mankind centres round the single task of finding some expedient (*i.e.* satisfying) solution between these individual claims and those of the civilized community; it is one of the problems of man's fate whether this solution can be arrived at in some particular form of culture or whether the conflict will prove irreconcilable. . . .

The evolution of culture seems to us a peculiar kind of process passing over humanity, of which several aspects strike us as familiar. We can describe this process in terms of the modifications it effects on the known human instinctual dispositions, which it is the economic task of our lives to satisfy. Some of these instincts become absorbed, as it were, so that something appears in place of them which in an individual we call a character-trait. The most remarkable example of this process is found in respect of the anal erotism of the young human beings. Their primary interest in the excretory function, its organs and products, is changed in the course of their growth into a group of traits that we know well—thriftiness, orderliness and cleanliness—valuable and welcome qualities in themselves, which, however, may be intensified till they visibly dominate the personality and produce what we call the anal character. . . . Other instincts have to be induced to change the conditions of their gratification, to find it along other paths, a process which is usually identical with what we know so well as sublimation (of the aim of an instinct), but which can sometimes be differentiated from this. Sublimation of instinct is an especially conspicuous feature of cultural evolution; this it is that makes it possible for the higher mental operations, scientific, artistic, ideological activities, to play such an important part in civilized life. . . .

*Part V*

We have regarded the difficulties in the development of civilization as part of the general difficulty accompanying all evolution, for we have traced them to the inertia of libido, its disinclination to relinquish an old position in favour of a new one. It is much the same thing if we say that the conflict between civilization and sexuality is caused by the circumstance that sexual love is a relationship between two people, in which a third can only be superfluous or disturbing, whereas civilization is founded on relations between larger groups of persons. When a love-relationship is at its height no room is left for any interest in the surrounding world; the pair of lovers are sufficient unto themselves, do not even need the child they have in common to make them happy. In no other case does Eros so plainly betray the core of his being, his aim of making one out of many; but when he has achieved it in the proverbial way through the love of two human beings, he is not willing to go further.

From all this we might well imagine that a civilized community could consist of pairs of individuals such as this, libidinally satisfied in each other, and linked to all the others by work and common interests. If this were so, culture would not need to levy energy from sexuality. But such a desirable state of things does not exist and never has existed; in actuality culture is not content with such limited ties as these; we see that it endeavours to bind the members of the community to one another by libidinal ties as well, that it makes use of every means and favours every avenue by which powerful identifications can be created among them, and that it exacts a heavy toll of aim-inhibited libido in order to strengthen communities by bonds of friendship between the members. Restrictions upon sexual life are unavoidable if this object is to be attained. But we cannot see the necessity that forces culture along this path and gives rise to its antagonism to sexuality. It must be due to some disturbing influence not yet detected by us.

We may find the clue in one of the so-called ideal standards of civilized society. It runs: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." It is world-renowned, undoubtedly older than Christianity which parades it as its proudest profession, yet certainly not very old; in historical times men still knew nothing of it. We will adopt a naïve attitude towards it, as if we were meeting it for the first time. Thereupon we find ourselves unable to suppress a feeling of astonishment, as at something unnatural. Why should we do this? What good is it to us? Above all, how can we do such a thing? How could it possibly be done? My love seems to me a valuable thing that



I have no right to throw away without reflection. It imposes obligations on me which I must be prepared to make sacrifices to fulfil. If I love someone, he must be worthy of it in some way or other. (I am leaving out of account now the use he may be to me, as well as his possible significance to me as a sexual object; neither of these two kinds of relationship between us come into question where the injunction to love my neighbour is concerned.) He will be worthy of it if he is so like me in important respects that I can love myself in him; worthy of it if he is so much more perfect than I that I can love my ideal of myself in him; I must love him if he is the son of my friend, since the pain my friend would feel if anything untoward happened to him would be my pain—I should have to share it. But if he is a stranger to me and cannot attract me by any value he has in himself or any significance he may have already acquired in my emotional life, it will be hard for me to love him. I shall even be doing wrong if I do, for my love is valued as a privilege by all those belonging to me; it is an injustice to them if I put a stranger on a level with them. But if I am to love him (with that kind of universal love) simply because he, too, is a denizen of the earth, like an insect or an earthworm or a grass-snake, then I fear that but a small modicum of love will fall to his lot and it would be impossible for me to give him as much as by all the laws of reason I am entitled to retain for myself. What is the point of an injunction promulgated with such solemnity, if reason does not recommend it to us? . . .

The existence of . . . [a] tendency to aggression which we can detect in ourselves and rightly presume to be present in others is the factor that disturbs our relations with our neighbours and makes it necessary for culture to institute its high demands. Civilized society is perpetually menaced with disintegration through this primary hostility of men towards one another. Their interests in their common work would not hold them together; the passions of instinct are stronger than reasoned interests. Culture has to call up every possible reinforcement in order to erect barriers against the aggressive instincts of men and hold their manifestations in check by reaction-formations in men's minds. Hence its system of methods by which mankind is to be driven to identifications and aim-inhibited love-relationships; hence the restrictions on sexual life; and hence, too, its ideal command to love one's neighbour as oneself, which is really justified by the fact that nothing is so completely at variance with original human nature as this. With all its striving, this endeavour of culture's has so far not achieved very much. Civilization expects to prevent the worst atrocities of brutal violence by taking

upon itself the right to employ violence against criminals, but the law is not able to lay hands on the more discreet and subtle forms in which human aggressions are expressed. . . .

If civilization requires such sacrifices, not only of sexuality but also of the aggressive tendencies in mankind, we can better understand why it should be so hard for men to feel happy in it. In actual fact primitive man was better off in this respect, for he knew nothing of any restrictions on his instincts. As a set-off against this, his prospects of enjoying his happiness for any length of time were very slight. Civilized man has exchanged some part of his chances of happiness for a measure of security. We will not forget, however, that in the primal family only the head of it enjoyed this instinctual freedom; the other members lived in slavish thralldom. The antithesis between a minority enjoying cultural advantages and a majority who are robbed of them was therefore most extreme in that primeval period of culture. With regard to the primitive human types living at the present time, careful investigation has revealed that their instinctual life is by no means to be envied on account of its freedom; it is subject to restrictions of a different kind but perhaps even more rigorous than is that of modern civilized man.

In rightly finding fault, as we thus do, with our present state of civilization for so inadequately providing us with what we require to make us happy in life, and for the amount of suffering of a probably avoidable nature it lays us open to—in doing our utmost to lay bare the roots of its deficiencies by our unsparing criticisms, we are undoubtedly exercising our just rights and not showing ourselves enemies of culture. We may expect that in the course of time changes will be carried out in our civilization so that it becomes more satisfying to our needs and no longer open to the reproaches we have made against it. But perhaps we shall also accustom ourselves to the idea that there are certain difficulties inherent in the very nature of culture which will not yield to any efforts at reform. Over and above the obligations of putting restrictions upon our instincts, which we see to be inevitable, we are imminently threatened with the dangers of a state one may call "*la misère psychologique*"<sup>1</sup> of groups. This danger is most menacing where the social forces of cohesion consist predominantly of identifications of the individuals in the group with one another, whilst leading personalities fail to acquire the significance that should fall to them in the process of group-formation. The state of civilization in America at the present day offers a good opportunity for studying this injurious effect of

<sup>1</sup> [*Psychological impoverishment.*]

civilization which we have reason to dread. But I will resist the temptation to enter upon a criticism of American culture; I have no desire to give the impression that I would employ American methods myself.

### *Part VI*

. . . The whole of analytic theory has evolved gradually enough, but the theory of instincts has groped its way forward under greater difficulties than any other part of it. And yet a theory of instincts was so indispensable for the rest that something had to be adopted in place of it. In my utter perplexity at the beginning, I took as my starting-point the poet-philosopher Schiller's aphorism, that hunger and love make the world go round. Hunger would serve to represent those instincts which aim at preservation of the individual; love seeks for objects; its chief function, which is favoured in every way by nature, is preservation of the species. Thus first arose the contrast between ego instincts and object instincts. For the energy of the latter instincts and exclusively for them I introduced the term libido; an antithesis was thus formed between the ego instincts and the libidinal instincts directed towards objects, *i.e.* love in its widest sense. One of these object instincts, the sadistic, certainly stood out from the rest in that its aim was so very unloving; moreover, it clearly allied itself in many of its aspects with the ego instincts, and its close kinship with instincts of mastery without any libidinal purpose could not be concealed, but these ambiguities could be overcome; in spite of them, sadism plainly belonged to sexual life—the game of cruelty could take the place of the game of love. Neurosis appeared as the outcome of a struggle between the interests of self-preservation and the claims of libido, a struggle in which the ego was victorious, but at the price of great suffering and renunciations. . . .

. . . On the basis of speculations concerning the origin of life and of biological parallels, I drew the conclusion that, beside the instinct preserving the organic substance and binding it into ever larger units, there must exist another in antithesis to this, which would seek to dissolve these units and reinstate their antecedent inorganic state; that is to say, a death instinct as well as Eros; the phenomena of life would then be explicable from the interplay of the two and their counteracting effects on each other. It was not easy, however, to demonstrate the working of this hypothetical death instinct. The manifestations of Eros were conspicuous and audible enough; one might assume that the death instinct worked silently within the organism towards its disintegration, but that, of course, was no proof. The idea that part of the

instinct became directed towards the outer world and then showed itself as an instinct of aggression and destruction carried us a step further. The instinct would thus itself have been pressed into the service of Eros, in that the organism would be destroying something animate or inanimate outside itself instead of itself. Conversely, any cessation of this flow outwards must have an effect of intensifying the self-destruction which in any case would always be going within. From this example one could then surmise that the two kinds of instincts seldom—perhaps never—appear in isolation, but always mingle with each other in different, very varying proportions, and so make themselves unrecognizable to us. Sadism, long since known to us as a component-instinct of sexuality, would represent a particularly strong admixture of the instinct of destruction into the love impulse; while its counterpart, masochism, would be an alliance between sexuality and the destruction at work within the self, in consequence of which the otherwise imperceptible destructive trend became directly evident and palpable. . . .

The name libido can again be used to denote the manifestations of the power of Eros in contradistinction to the energy of the death instinct.<sup>2</sup> We must confess that it is more difficult for us to detect the latter, and to a great extent we can merely conjecture its existence as a background to Eros, also that it eludes us wherever it is not betrayed by a fusion with Eros. In sadism, where it bends the erotic aim to its own will and yet at the same time gratifies the sexual craving completely, we can obtain the clearest insight into its nature and its relation to Eros. But even where it shows itself without any sexual purpose, even in the blindest frenzy of destructiveness, one cannot ignore the fact that satisfaction of it is accompanied by an extraordinarily intense narcissistic enjoyment, due to the fulfilment it brings to the ego of its oldest omnipotence-wishes. The instinct of destruction, when tempered and harnessed (as it were, inhibited in its aim) and directed towards objects, is compelled to provide the ego with satisfaction of its needs and with power over nature. Since the assumption of its existence is based essentially on theoretical grounds, it must be confessed that it is not entirely proof against theoretical objections. But this is how things appear to us now in the present state of our knowledge; future research and reflection will undoubtedly bring further light which will decide the question.

In all that follows I take up the standpoint that the tendency to aggression is an innate, independent, instinctual disposition in man, and I come back now to the statement that it constitutes the most powerful obstacle to

<sup>2</sup> Our present point of view can be roughly expressed in the statement that libido participates in every instinctual manifestation, but that not everything in that manifestation is libido.



culture. At one point in the course of this discussion the idea took possession of us that culture was a peculiar process passing over human life and we are still under the influence of this idea. We may add to this that the process proves to be in the service of Eros, which aims at binding together single human individuals, then families, then tribes, races, nations, into one great unity, that of humanity. Why this has to be done we do not know; it is simply the work of Eros. These masses of men must be bound to one another libidinally; necessity alone, the advantages of common work, would not hold them together. The natural instinct of aggressiveness in man, the hostility of each one against all and of all against each one, opposes this programme of civilization. This instinct of aggression is the derivative and main representative of the death instinct we have found alongside of Eros, sharing his rule over the earth. And now, it seems to me, the meaning of the evolution of culture is no longer a riddle to us. It must present to us the struggle between Eros and Death, between the instincts of life and the instincts of destruction, as it works itself out in the human species. This struggle is what all life essentially consists of and so the evolution of civilization may be simply described as the struggle of the human species for existence. And it is this battle of the Titans that our nurses and governesses try to compose with their lullaby-song of Heaven!

### *Part VII*

Why do the animals, kin to ourselves, not manifest any such cultural struggle? Oh, we don't know. Very probably certain of them, bees, ants, termites, had to strive for thousands of centuries before they found the way to those state institutions, that division of functions, those restrictions upon individuals, which we admire them for to-day. It is characteristic of our present state that we know by our own feelings that we should not think ourselves happy in any of these communities of the animal world, or in any of the rôles they delegate to individuals. With other animal species it may be that a temporary deadlock has been reached between the influences of their environment and the instincts contending within them, so that a cessation of development has taken place. In primitive man a fresh access of libido may have kindled a new spurt of energy on the part of the instinct of destruction. There are a great many questions in all this to which as yet we have no answer.

Another question concerns us more closely now. What means does civilization make use of to hold in check the aggressiveness that opposes it, to

make it harmless, perhaps to get rid of it? Some of these measures we have already come to know, though not yet the one that is apparently the most important. We can study it in the evolution of the individual. What happens in him to render his craving for aggression innocuous? Something very curious, that we should never have guessed and that yet seems simple enough. The aggressiveness is introjected, "internalized"; in fact, it is sent back where it came from, *i.e.* directed against the ego. It is there taken over by a part of the ego that distinguishes itself from the rest as a super-ego, and now, in the form of "conscience," exercises the same propensity to harsh aggressiveness against the ego that the ego would have liked to enjoy against others. The tension between the strict super-ego and the subordinate ego we call the sense of guilt; it manifests itself as the need for punishment. Civilization therefore obtains the mastery over the dangerous love of aggression in individuals by enfeebling and disarming it and setting up an institution within their minds to keep watch over it, like a garrison in a conquered city. . . .

. . . [We] know of two sources for feelings of guilt: that arising from the dread of authority and the later one from the dread of the super-ego. The first one compels us to renounce instinctual gratification; the other presses over and above this towards punishment, since the persistence of forbidden wishes cannot be concealed from the super-ego. We have also heard how the severity of the super-ego, the rigour of conscience, is to be explained. It simply carries on the severity of external authority which it has succeeded and to some extent replaced. We see now how renunciation of instinctual gratification is related to the sense of guilt. Originally, it is true, renunciation is the consequence of a dread of external authority; one gives up pleasures so as not to lose its love. Having made this renunciation, one is quits with authority, so to speak; no feeling of guilt should remain. But with the dread of the super-ego the case is different. Renunciation of gratification does not suffice here, for the wish persists and is not capable of being hidden from the super-ego. In spite of the renunciations made, feelings of guilt will be experienced, and this is a great disadvantage economically of the erection of the super-ego, or, as one may say, of the formation of conscience. Renunciation no longer has a completely absolving effect; virtuous restraint is no longer rewarded by the assurance of love; a threatened external unhappiness—loss of love and punishment meted out by external authority—has been exchanged for a lasting inner unhappiness, the tension of a sense of guilt. . . .

. . . [Here] at last comes in an idea which is quite peculiar to psychoanalysis and alien to ordinary ways of thinking. Its nature enables us to

understand why the whole matter necessarily seemed so confused and obscure to us. It tells us this: in the beginning conscience (more correctly, the anxiety which later became conscience) was the cause of instinctual renunciation, but later this relation is reversed. Every renunciation then becomes a dynamic fount of conscience; every fresh abandonment of gratification increases its severity and intolerance; and if we could only bring it better into harmony with what we already know about the development of conscience, we should be tempted to make the following paradoxical statement: Conscience is the result of instinctual renunciation, or: Renunciation (externally imposed) gives rise to conscience, which then demands further renunciations.

The contradiction between this proposition and our previous knowledge about the genesis of conscience is not in actual fact so very great. . . . [For] the formation of the super-ego and the development of conscience are determined in part by innate constitutional factors and in part by the influence of the actual environment; and that is in no way surprising—on the contrary, it is the invariable aetiological condition of all such processes.

It may also be said that when a child reacts to the first great instinctual deprivations with an excessive aggressiveness and a corresponding strictness of its super-ego, it is thereby following a phylogenetic prototype, unheeding of what reaction would in reality be justified; for the father of primitive times was certainly terrifying, and one may safely attribute the utmost degree of aggressiveness to him. The differences between the two theories of the genesis of conscience are thus still further diminished if one passes from individual to phylogenetic development. But then, on the other hand, we find a new important difference between the two processes. We cannot disregard the conclusion that man's sense of guilt has its origin in the Oedipus complex and was acquired when the father was killed by the association of the brothers. At that time the aggression was not suppressed but carried out, and it is this same act of aggression whose suppression in the child we regard as the source of feelings of guilt. . . .

It is not really a decisive matter whether one has killed one's father or abstained from the deed; one must feel guilty in either case, for guilt is the expression of the conflict of ambivalence, the eternal struggle between Eros and the destructive or death instinct. This conflict is engendered as soon as man is confronted with the task of living with his fellows; as long as he knows no other form of life in common but that of the family, it must express itself in the Oedipus complex, cause the development of conscience and create the first feelings of guilt. When mankind tries to institute wider

forms of communal life, the same conflict continues to arise—in forms derived from the past—and intensified so that a further reinforcement of the sense of guilt results. Since culture obeys an inner erotic impulse which bids it bind mankind into a closely knit mass, it can achieve this aim only by means of its vigilance in fomenting an ever-increasing sense of guilt. That which began in relation to the father ends in relation to the community. If civilization is an inevitable course of development from the group of the family to the group of humanity as a whole, then an intensification of the sense of guilt—resulting from the innate conflict of ambivalence, from the eternal struggle between the love and the death trends—will be inextricably bound up with it, until perhaps the sense of guilt may swell to a magnitude that individuals can hardly support. One is reminded of the telling accusation made by the great poet against the “heavenly forces”:

Ye set our feet on this life's road,  
Ye watch our guilty, erring courses,  
Then leave us, bowed beneath our load,  
For earth its every debt enforces.<sup>3</sup>

And one may heave a sigh at the thought that it is vouchsafed to a few, with hardly an effort, to salve from the whirlpool of their own emotions the deepest truths, to which we others have to force our way, ceaselessly groping amid torturing uncertainties.

### *Part VIII*

On reaching the end of such a journey as this, the author must beg his readers to pardon him for not having been a more skilful guide, not sparing them bleak stretches of country at times and laborious detours at others. There is no doubt that it could have been done better. I will now try to make some amends.

First of all, I suspect the reader feels that the discussion about the sense of guilt oversteps its proper boundaries in this essay and takes up too much space . . . but it faithfully corresponds to my intention to represent the sense of guilt as the most important problem in the evolution of culture, and to convey that the price of progress in civilization is paid in forfeiting happiness through the heightening of the sense of guilt. What sounds puzzling in this statement, which is the final conclusion of our whole investigation, is probably due to the quite peculiar relation—as yet completely unexplained—the sense of guilt has to our consciousness. . . .

<sup>3</sup> Goethe, *Wilhelm Meister*. The Song of the Harper.



. . . [At] bottom the sense of guilt is nothing but a topographical variety of anxiety, and . . . in its later phases it coincides completely with the dread of the super-ego. The relation of anxiety to consciousness, moreover, is characterized by the same extraordinary variations. Somewhere or other there is always anxiety hidden behind all symptoms; at one moment, however, it sweeps into consciousness, drowning everything else with its clamour, and at the next it secretes itself so completely that we are forced to speak of unconscious anxiety—or if we want to have a cleaner conscience psychologically, since anxiety is after all only a perception—of possibilities of anxiety. Consequently it is very likely that the sense of guilt produced by culture is not perceived as such and remains to a great extent unconscious, or comes to expression as a sort of uneasiness or discontent for which other motivations are sought. . . .

. . . The symptoms of neurosis, as we have learnt, are essentially substitutive gratifications for unfulfilled sexual wishes. In the course of our analytic work we have found to our surprise that perhaps every neurosis masks a certain amount of unconscious sense of guilt, which in its turn reinforces the symptoms by exploiting them as punishment. One is now inclined to suggest the following statement as a possible formulation: when an instinctual trend undergoes repression, its libidinal elements are transformed into symptoms and its aggressive components into a sense of guilt. . . .

. . . When . . . we compare the cultural process in humanity with the process of development or upbringing in an individual human being, we shall conclude without much hesitation that the two are very similar in nature, if not in fact the same process applied to a different kind of object. The civilizing process in the human species is naturally more of an abstraction than the development of an individual, and therefore harder to apprehend in concrete terms, nor should the discovery of analogies be pushed to extremes; but in view of the similar character of the aims of the two processes—in one the incorporation of an individual as a member of a group and in the other the creation of a single group out of many individuals—the similarity of the means employed and of the results obtained in the two cases is not surprising. In view of its exceptional importance, we must no longer postpone mention of one feature differentiating the two processes. The development of the individual is ordered according to the programme laid down by the pleasure-principle, namely, the attainment of happiness, and to this main objective it holds firmly; the incorporation of the individual as a member of a community, or his adaptation to it, seems like an almost unavoidable condition which has to be filled before he can attain this objective

of happiness. If he could achieve it without fulfilling this condition it would perhaps be better. To express it differently, we may say: individual development seems to us a product of the interplay of two trends, the striving for happiness, generally called "egoistic," and the impulse towards merging with others in the community, which we call "altruistic." Neither of these descriptions goes far beneath the surface. In individual development, as we have said, the main accent falls on the egoistic trend, the striving for happiness; while the other tendency, which may be called the "cultural" one, usually contents itself with instituting restrictions. But things are different in the development of culture: here far the most important aim is that of creating a single unity out of individual men and women, while the objective of happiness, though still present, is pushed into the background; it almost seems as if humanity could be most successfully united into one great whole if there were no need to trouble about the happiness of individuals. The process of development in individuals must therefore be admitted to have its special features which are not repeated in the cultural evolution of humanity; the two processes only necessarily coincide in so far as the first also includes the aim of incorporation into the community.

Just as a planet circles round its central body while at the same time rotating on its own axis, so the individual man takes his part in the course of humanity's development as he goes on his way through life. But to our dull eyes the play of forces in the heavens seems set fast in a never-varying scheme, though in organic life we can still see how the forces contend with one another and the results of the conflict change from day to day. So in every individual the two trends, one towards personal happiness and the other towards unity with the rest of humanity, must contend with each other; so must the two processes of individual and of cultural development oppose each other and dispute the ground against each other. This struggle between individual and society, however, is not derived from the antagonism of the primal instincts, Eros and Death, which are probably irreconcilable; it is a dissension in the camp of the libido itself, comparable to the contest between the ego and its objects for a share of the libido; and it does eventually admit of a solution in the individual, as we may hope it will also do in the future of civilization—however greatly it may oppress the lives of individuals at the present time. . . .

. . . We already know—it is what we have been discussing—that the question is how to dislodge the greatest obstacle to civilization, the constitutional tendency in men to aggressions against one another; and for that very reason the commandment to love one's neighbour as oneself—probably the

most recent of the cultural super-ego's demands—is especially interesting to us. In our investigations and our therapy of the neuroses we cannot avoid finding fault with the super-ego of the individual on two counts: in commanding and prohibiting with such severity it troubles too little about the happiness of the ego, and it fails to take into account sufficiently the difficulties in the way of obeying it—the strength of instinctual cravings in the id and the hardships of external environment. Consequently in our therapy we often find ourselves obliged to do battle with the super-ego and work to moderate its demands. Exactly the same objections can be made against the ethical standards of the cultural super-ego. It, too, does not trouble enough about the mental constitution of human beings; it enjoins a command and never asks whether or not it is possible for them to obey it. It presumes, on the contrary, that a man's ego is psychologically capable of anything that is required of it—that his ego has unlimited power over his id. This is an error; even in so-called normal people the power of controlling the id cannot be increased beyond certain limits. If one asks more of them, one produces revolt or neurosis in individuals or makes them unhappy. The command to love our neighbours as ourselves is the strongest defence there is against human aggressiveness and it is a superlative example of the unpsychological attitude of the cultural super-ego. The command is impossible to fulfil; such an enormous inflation of love can only lower its value and not remedy the evil. Civilization pays no heed to all this; it merely prates that the harder it is to obey the more laudable the obedience. The fact remains that anyone who follows such preaching in the present state of civilization only puts himself at a disadvantage beside all those who set it at naught. What an overwhelming obstacle to civilization aggression must be if the defence against it can cause as much misery as aggression itself! . . .

The fateful question of the human species seems to me to be whether and to what extent the cultural process developed in it will succeed in mastering the derangements of communal life caused by the human instinct of aggression and self-destruction. In this connection, perhaps the phase through which we are at this moment passing deserves special interest. Men have brought their powers of subduing the forces of nature to such a pitch that by using them they could now very easily exterminate one another to the last man. They know this—hence arises a great part of their current unrest, their dejection, their mood of apprehension. And now it may be expected that the other of the two “heavenly forces,” eternal Eros, will put forth his strength so as to maintain himself alongside of his equally immortal adversary.

## ÉMILE DURKHEIM

THE development of the social sciences in the nineteenth century received its impetus from the growing appreciation of the temporal and structural dimensions of human society. However, the desire to study the various modes of social experience in scientific terms reflected multiple and diverse aims. In the thought of the Utopians, the Utilitarians, and Auguste Comte (1798–1857), Karl Marx (1818–1883) and Herbert Spencer (1820–1903), the science of society was expected, variously, to analyze and interpret institutions; to clarify basic concepts; to serve as an instrument for programmatic reform; to extend scientific principles to social conduct. And so for Émile Durkheim (1858–1917), one of the pioneers of sociology, it was a challenging prospect to discover and refine methods, techniques, and conceptual tools for the exploration and analysis of society. Durkheim insisted, however, upon a non-reductive study of society. That is, what we call a *social* event or fact

“consists of ways of acting, thinking, and feeling, external to the individual and endowed with a power of coercion, by reason of which they control him. These ways of thinking could not be confused with biological phenomena, since they consist of representations and of actions; nor with psychological phenomena, which exist only in the individual consciousness and through it. They constitute, thus, a new variety of phenomena; and it is to them exclusively that the term ‘social’ ought to be applied” (*The Rules of Sociological Method*).

As Durkheim himself regarded it, society must be studied on its own terms, *sui generis*, as a phenomenon unique and qualitatively different from other events in nature. But, for Durkheim, this did not imply that sociology was strictly descriptive, a cataloguing of the variety of social habits and institutions; nor did it suggest that the persistent facts of man’s biological and psychological nature be subsumed under the category of “social facts.”

For Durkheim, therefore, society was essentially a network of moral relations established among men. In his view this did not negate the principle of individuality or the phenomenon of personality, nor did it vindicate all modes of constraint and coercion as “normal” and necessary for social experience. Certain constraints, however, are basic to all human associations, whether legal, religious, economic, or occupational; for, in the absence of any framework of limits and possibilities for human action, man’s opportunities for self-realization become stultified. In fact, the breakdown in these subtle rules of conduct, as Durkheim illustrates in his study on *Suicide*, deprives the individual of his status as a moral creature. This condition of *anomy*, for Durkheim, reveals to us the precarious character of a modern industrial society, and indicates the need for an understanding and re-evaluation of our changing communal obligations.

During his years as professor of social science at the University of Bordeaux, and later of sociology and education at the University of Paris, Durkheim’s interests



encompassed the areas of law, religion, moral philosophy, economics, and education. His major works were *The Division of Labor in Society* (1893), *The Rules of Sociological Method* (1895), *Suicide: A Study in Sociology* (1897), and *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1912). He published numerous articles in philosophic journals as well as in the important periodical, *L'année sociologique*, of which he was editor-in-chief (1896-1912). The following selection has been taken from *Suicide*, in the translation from the original French by John A. Spaulding and George Simpson.



## SUICIDE: A STUDY IN SOCIOLOGY

### *Book II: Social Causes and Social Types*

#### CHAPTER V: ANOMIC SUICIDE

. . . No living being can be happy or even exist unless his needs are sufficiently proportioned to his means. In other words, if his needs require more than can be granted, or even merely something of a different sort, they will be under continual friction and can only function painfully. Movements incapable of production without pain tend not to be reproduced. Unsatisfied tendencies atrophy, and as the impulse to live is merely the result of all the rest, it is bound to weaken as the others relax.

In the animal, at least in a normal condition, this equilibrium is established with automatic spontaneity because the animal depends on purely material conditions. All the organism needs is that the supplies of substance and energy constantly employed in the vital process should be periodically renewed by equivalent quantities; that replacement be equivalent to use. When the void created by existence in its own resources is filled, the animal, satisfied, asks nothing further. Its power of reflection is not sufficiently developed to imagine other ends than those implicit in its physical nature. On the other hand, as the work demanded of each organ itself depends on the general state of vital energy and the needs of organic equilibrium, use is regulated in turn by replacement and the balance is automatic. The limits of one are those of the other; both are fundamental to the constitution of the existence in question, which cannot exceed them.

This is not the case with man, because most of his needs are not dependent

---

This selection has been reprinted from Émile Durkheim, *Suicide* (pp. 246-260, 261-266, 268-273, 275-276, 297-300, 306-325. Copyright 1951, by The Free Press, Glencoe, Ill.), by permission of the publisher.

on his body or not to the same degree. Strictly speaking, we may consider that the quantity of material supplies necessary to the physical maintenance of a human life is subject to computation, though this be less exact than in the preceding case and a wider margin left for the free combinations of the will; for beyond the indispensable minimum which satisfies nature when instinctive, a more awakened reflection suggests better conditions, seemingly desirable ends craving fulfillment. Such appetites, however, admittedly sooner or later reach a limit which they cannot pass. But how determine the quantity of well-being, comfort or luxury legitimately to be craved by a human being? Nothing appears in man's organic nor in his psychological constitution which sets a limit to such tendencies. The functioning of individual life does not require them to cease at one point rather than at another; the proof being that they have constantly increased since the beginnings of history, receiving more and more complete satisfaction, yet with no weakening of average health. Above all, how establish their proper variation with different conditions of life, occupations, relative importance of services, etc.? In no society are they equally satisfied in the different stages of the social hierarchy. Yet human nature is substantially the same among all men, in its essential qualities. It is not human nature which can assign the variable limits necessary to our needs. They are thus unlimited so far as they depend on the individual alone. Irrespective of any external regulatory force, our capacity for feeling is in itself an insatiable and bottomless abyss.

But if nothing external can restrain this capacity, it can only be a source of torment to itself. Unlimited desires are insatiable by definition and insatiability is rightly considered a sign of morbidity. Being unlimited, they constantly and infinitely surpass the means at their command; they cannot be quenched. Inextinguishable thirst is constantly renewed torture. It has been claimed, indeed, that human activity naturally aspires beyond assignable limits and sets itself unattainable goals. But how can such an undetermined state be any more reconciled with the conditions of mental life than with the demands of physical life? All man's pleasure in acting, moving and exerting himself implies the sense that his efforts are not in vain and that by walking he has advanced. However, one does not advance when one walks toward no goal, or—which is the same thing—when his goal is infinity. Since the distance between us and it is always the same, whatever road we take, we might as well have made the motions without progress from the spot. Even our glances behind and our feeling of pride at the distance covered can cause only deceptive satisfaction, since the remaining distance is not proportionately reduced. To pursue a goal which is by defini-

tion unattainable is to condemn oneself to a state of perpetual unhappiness. Of course, man may hope contrary to all reason, and hope has its pleasures even when unreasonable. It may sustain him for a time; but it cannot survive the repeated disappointments of experience indefinitely. What more can the future offer him than the past, since he can never reach a tenable condition nor even approach the glimpsed ideal? Thus, the more one has, the more one wants, since satisfactions received only stimulate instead of filling needs. Shall action as such be considered agreeable? First, only on condition of blindness to its uselessness. Secondly, for this pleasure to be felt and to temper and half veil the accompanying painful unrest, such unending motion must at least always be easy and unhampered. If it is interfered with only restlessness is left, with the lack of ease which it, itself, entails. But it would be a miracle if no insurmountable obstacle were never encountered. Our thread of life on these conditions is pretty thin, breakable at any instant.

To achieve any other result, the passions first must be limited. Only then can they be harmonized with the faculties and satisfied. But since the individual has no way of limiting them, this must be done by some force exterior to him. A regulative force must play the same role for moral needs which the organism plays for physical needs. This means that the force can only be moral. The awakening of conscience interrupted the state of equilibrium of the animal's dormant existence; only conscience, therefore, can furnish the means to re-establish it. Physical restraint would be ineffective; hearts cannot be touched by physio-chemical forces. So far as the appetities are not automatically restrained by physiological mechanisms, they can be halted only by a limit that they recognize as just. Men would never consent to restrict their desires if they felt justified in passing the assigned limit. But, for reasons given above, they cannot assign themselves this law of justice. So they must receive it from an authority which they respect, to which they yield spontaneously. Either directly and as a whole, or through the agency of one of its organs, society alone can play this moderating role; for it is the only moral power superior to the individual, the authority of which he accepts. It alone has the power necessary to stipulate law and to set the point beyond which the passions must not go. Finally, it alone can estimate the reward to be prospectively offered to every class of human functionary, in the name of the common interest.

As a matter of fact, at every moment of history there is a dim perception, in the moral consciousness of societies, of the respective value of different social services, the relative reward due to each, and the consequent degree of comfort appropriate on the average to workers in each occupation. The dif-

ferent functions are graded in public opinion and a certain coefficient of well-being assigned to each, according to its place in the hierarchy. According to accepted ideas, for example, a certain way of living is considered the upper limit to which a workman may aspire in his efforts to improve his existence, and there is another limit below which he is not willingly permitted to fall unless he has seriously demeaned himself. Both differ for city and country workers, for the domestic servant and the day-laborer, for the business clerk and the official, etc. Likewise the man of wealth is reproved if he lives the life of a poor man, but also if he seeks the refinements of luxury overmuch. Economists may protest in vain: public feeling will always be scandalized if an individual spends too much wealth for wholly superfluous use, and it even seems that this severity relaxes only in times of moral disturbance. A genuine regimen exists, therefore, although not always legally formulated, which fixes with relative precision the maximum degree of ease of living to which each social class may legitimately aspire. However, there is nothing immutable about such a scale. It changes with the increase or decrease of collective revenue and the changes occurring in the moral ideas of society. Thus what appears luxury to one period no longer does to another; and the well-being which for long periods was granted to a class only by exception and supererogation, finally appears strictly necessary and equitable.

Under this pressure, each in his sphere vaguely realizes the extreme limit set to his ambitions and aspires to nothing beyond. At least if he respects regulations and is docile to collective authority, that is, has a wholesome moral constitution, he feels that it is not well to ask more. Thus, an end and goal are set to the passions. Truly, there is nothing rigid nor absolute about such determination. The economic ideal assigned each class of citizens is itself confined to certain limits, within which the desires have free range. But it is not infinite. This relative limitation and the moderation it involves, make men contented with their lot while stimulating them moderately to improve it; and this average contentment causes the feeling of calm, active happiness, the pleasure in existing and living which characterizes health for societies as well as for individuals. Each person is then at least, generally speaking, in harmony with his condition, and desires only what he may legitimately hope for as the normal reward of his activity. Besides, this does not condemn man to a sort of immobility. He may seek to give beauty to his life; but his attempts in this direction may fail without causing him to despair. For, loving what he has and not fixing his desire solely on what he lacks, his wishes and hopes may fail of what he has happened to aspire to,



without his being wholly destitute. He has the essentials. The equilibrium of his happiness is secure because it is defined, and a few mishaps cannot disconcert him.

But it would be of little use for everyone to recognize the justice of the hierarchy of functions established by public opinion, if he did not also consider the distribution of these functions just. The workman is not in harmony with his social position if he is not convinced that he has his desserts. If he feels justified in occupying another, what he has would not satisfy him. So it is not enough for the average level of needs for each social condition to be regulated by public opinion, but another, more precise rule, must fix the way in which these conditions are open to individuals. There is no society in which such regulation does not exist. It varies with times and places. Once it regarded birth as the almost exclusive principle of social classification; today it recognizes no other inherent inequality than hereditary fortune and merit. But in all these various forms its object is unchanged. It is also only possible, everywhere, as a restriction upon individuals imposed by superior authority, that is, by collective authority. For it can be established only by requiring of one or another group of men, usually of all, sacrifices and concessions in the name of the public interest.

Some, to be sure, have thought that this moral pressure would become unnecessary if men's economic circumstances were only no longer determined by heredity. If inheritance were abolished, the argument runs, if everyone began life with equal resources and if the competitive struggle were fought on a basis of perfect equality, no one could think its results unjust. Each would instinctively feel that things are as they should be.

Truly, the nearer this ideal equality were approached, the less social restraint will be necessary. But it is only a matter of degree. One sort of heredity will always exist, that of natural talent. Intelligence, taste, scientific, artistic, literary or industrial ability, courage and manual dexterity are gifts received by each of us at birth, as the heir to wealth receives his capital or as the nobleman formerly received his title and function. A moral discipline will therefore still be required to make those less favored by nature accept the lesser advantages which they owe to the chance of birth. Shall it be demanded that all have an equal share and that no advantage be given those more useful and deserving? But then there would have to be a discipline far stronger to make these accept a treatment merely equal to that of the mediocre and incapable.

But like the one first mentioned, this discipline can be useful only if considered just by the peoples subject to it. When it is maintained only by

custom and force, peace and harmony are illusory; the spirit of unrest and discontent are latent; appetites superficially restrained are ready to revolt. This happened in Rome and Greece when the faiths underlying the old organization of the patricians and plebeians were shaken, and in our modern societies when aristocratic prejudices began to lose their old ascendancy. But this state of upheaval is exceptional; it occurs only when society is passing through some abnormal crisis. In normal conditions the collective order is regarded as just by the great majority of persons. Therefore, when we say that an authority is necessary to impose this order on individuals, we certainly do not mean that violence is the only means of establishing it. Since this regulation is meant to restrain individual passions, it must come from a power which dominates individuals; but this power must also be obeyed through respect, not fear.

It is not true, then, that human activity can be released from all restraint. Nothing in the world can enjoy such a privilege. All existence being a part of the universe is relative to the remainder; its nature and method of manifestation accordingly depend not only on itself but on other beings, who consequently restrain and regulate it. Here there are only differences of degree and form between the mineral realm and the thinking person. Man's characteristic privilege is that the bond he accepts is not physical but moral; that is, social. He is governed not by a material environment brutally imposed on him, but by a conscience superior to his own, the superiority of which he feels. Because the greater, better part of his existence transcends the body, he escapes the body's yoke, but is subject to that of society.

But when society is disturbed by some painful crisis or by beneficent but abrupt transitions, it is momentarily incapable of exercising this influence; thence come the sudden rises in the curve of suicides. . . .

In the case of economic disasters, indeed, something like a declassification occurs which suddenly casts certain individuals into a lower state than their previous one. Then they must reduce their requirements, restrain their needs, learn greater self-control. All the advantages of social influence are lost so far as they are concerned; their moral education has to be recommenced. But society cannot adjust them instantaneously to this new life and teach them to practice the increased self-repression to which they are unaccustomed. So they are not adjusted to the condition forced on them, and its very prospect is intolerable; hence the suffering which detaches them from a reduced existence even before they have made trial of it.

It is the same if the source of the crisis is an abrupt growth of power and wealth. Then, truly, as the conditions of life are changed, the standard ac-

ording to which needs were regulated can no longer remain the same; for it varies with social resources, since it largely determines the share of each class of producers. The scale is upset; but a new scale cannot be immediately improvised. Time is required for the public conscience to reclassify men and things. So long as the social forces thus freed have not regained equilibrium, their respective values are unknown and so all regulation is lacking for a time. The limits are unknown between the possible and the impossible, what is just and what is unjust, legitimate claims and hopes and those which are immoderate. Consequently, there is no restraint upon aspirations. If the disturbance is profound, it affects even the principles controlling the distribution of men among various occupations. Since the relations between various parts of society are necessarily modified, the ideas expressing these relations must change. Some particular class especially favored by the crisis is no longer resigned to its former lot, and, on the other hand, the example of its greater good fortune arouses all sorts of jealousy below and about it. Appetites, not being controlled by a public opinion become disoriented, no longer recognize the limits proper to them. Besides, they are at the same time seized by a sort of natural erethism simply by the greater intensity of public life. With increased prosperity desires increase. At the very moment when traditional rules have lost their authority, the richer prize offered these appetites stimulates them and makes them more exigent and impatient of control. The state of de-regulation or anomy is thus further heightened by passions being less disciplined, precisely when they need more disciplining.

But then their very demands make fulfillment impossible. Overweening ambition always exceeds the results obtained, great as they may be, since there is no warning to pause here. Nothing gives satisfaction and all this agitation is uninterruptedly maintained without appeasement. Above all, since this race for an unattainable goal can give no other pleasure but that of the race itself, if it is one, once it is interrupted the participants are left empty-handed. At the same time the struggle grows more violent and painful, both from being less controlled and because competition is greater. All classes contend among themselves because no established classification any longer exists. Effort grows, just when it becomes less productive. How could the desire to live not be weakened under such conditions?

This explanation is confirmed by the remarkable immunity of poor countries. Poverty protects against suicide because it is a restraint in itself. No matter how one acts, desires have to depend upon resources to some extent; actual possessions are partly the criterion of those aspired to. So the less one

has the less he is tempted to extend the range of his needs indefinitely. Lack of power, compelling moderation, accustoms men to it, while nothing excites envy if no one has superfluity. Wealth, on the other hand, by the power it bestows, deceives us into believing that we depend on ourselves only. Reducing the resistance we encounter from objects, it suggests the possibility of unlimited success against them. The less limited one feels, the more intolerable all limitation appears. Not without reason, therefore, have so many religions dwelt on the advantages and moral value of poverty. It is actually the best school for teaching self-restraint. Forcing us to constant self-discipline, it prepares us to accept collective discipline with equanimity, while wealth, exalting the individual, may always arouse the spirit of rebellion which is the very source of immorality. This, of course, is no reason why humanity should not improve its material condition. But though the moral danger involved in every growth of prosperity is not irremediable, it should not be forgotten.

If anomy never appeared except, as in the above instances, in intermittent spurts and acute crisis, it might cause the social suicide-rate to vary from time to time, but it would not be a regular, constant factor. In one sphere of social life, however—the sphere of trade and industry—it is actually in a chronic state.

For a whole century, economic progress has mainly consisted in freeing industrial relations from all regulation. Until very recently, it was the function of a whole system of moral forces to exert this discipline. First, the influence of religion was felt alike by workers and masters, the poor and the rich. It consoled the former and taught them contentment with their lot by informing them of the providential nature of the social order, that the share of each class was assigned by God himself, and by holding out the hope for just compensation in a world to come in return for the inequalities of this world. It governed the latter, recalling that worldly interests are not man's entire lot, that they must be subordinate to other and higher interests, and that they should therefore not be pursued without rule or measure. Temporal power, in turn, restrained the scope of economic functions by its supremacy over them and by the relatively subordinate role it assigned them. Finally, within the business world proper, the occupational groups by regulating salaries, the price of products and production itself, indirectly fixed the average level of income on which needs are partially based by the very force of circumstances. However, we do not mean to propose this organization as a model. Clearly it would be inadequate to existing societies without



great changes. What we stress is its existence, the fact of its useful influence, and that nothing today has come to take its place.

Actually, religion has lost most of its power. And government, instead of regulating economic life, has become its tool and servant. The most opposite schools, orthodox economists and extreme socialists, unite to reduce government to the role of a more or less passive intermediary among the various social functions. The former wish to make it simply the guardian of individual contracts; the latter leave it the task of doing the collective book-keeping, that is, of recording the demands of consumers, transmitting them to producers, inventorying the total revenue and distributing it according to a fixed formula. But both refuse it any power to subordinate other social organs to itself and to make them converge toward one dominant aim. On both sides nations are declared to have the single or chief purpose of achieving industrial prosperity; such is the implication of the dogma of economic materialism, the basis of both apparently opposed systems. And as these theories merely express the state of opinion, industry, instead of being still regarded as a means to an end transcending itself, has become the supreme end of individuals and societies alike. Thereupon the appetites thus excited have become freed of any limiting authority. By sanctifying them, so to speak, this apotheosis of well-being has placed them above all human law. Their restraint seems like a sort of sacrilege. For this reason, even the purely utilitarian regulation of them exercised by the industrial world itself through the medium of occupational groups has been unable to persist. Ultimately, this liberation of desires has been made worse by the very development of industry and the almost infinite extension of the market. So long as the producer could gain his profits only in his immediate neighborhood, the restricted amount of possible gain could not much overexcite ambition. Now that he may assume to have almost the entire world as his customer, how could passions accept their former confinement in the face of such limitless prospects?

Such is the source of the excitement predominating in this part of society, and which has thence extended to the other parts. There the state of crisis and anomy is constant and, so to speak, normal. From top to bottom of the ladder, greed is aroused without knowing where to find ultimate foothold. Nothing can calm it, since its goal is far beyond all it can attain. Reality seems valueless by comparison with the dreams of fevered imaginations; reality is therefore abandoned, but so too is possibility abandoned when it in turn becomes reality. A thirst arises for novelties, unfamiliar pleasures,

nameless sensations, all of which lose their savor once known. Henceforth one has no strength to endure the least reverse. The whole fever subsides and the sterility of all the tumult is apparent, and it is seen that all these new sensations in their infinite quantity cannot form a solid foundation of happiness to support one during days of trial. The wise man, knowing how to enjoy achieved results without having constantly to replace them with others, finds in them an attachment to life in the hour of difficulty. But the man who has always pinned all his hopes on the future and lived with his eyes fixed upon it, has nothing in the past as a comfort against the present's afflictions, for the past was nothing to him but a series of hastily experienced stages. What blinded him to himself was his expectation always to find further on the happiness he had so far missed. Now he is stopped in his tracks; from now on nothing remains behind or ahead of him to fix his gaze upon. Weariness alone, moreover, is enough to bring disillusionment, for he cannot in the end escape the futility of an endless pursuit.

We may even wonder if this moral state is not principally what makes economic catastrophes of our day so fertile in suicides. In societies where a man is subjected to a healthy discipline, he submits more readily to the blows of chance. The necessary effort for sustaining a little more discomfort costs him relatively little, since he is used to discomfort and constraint. But when every constraint is hateful in itself, how can closer constraint not seem intolerable? There is no tendency to resignation in the feverish impatience of men's lives. When there is no other aim but to outstrip constantly the point arrived at, how painful to be thrown back! Now this very lack of organization characterizing our economic condition throws the door wide to every sort of adventure. Since imagination is hungry for novelty, and ungoverned, it gropes at random. Setbacks necessarily increase with risks and thus crises multiply, just when they are becoming more destructive.

Yet these dispositions are so inbred that society has grown to accept them and is accustomed to think them normal. It is everlastingly repeated that it is man's nature to be eternally dissatisfied, constantly to advance, without relief or rest, toward an indefinite goal. The longing for infinity is daily represented as a mark of moral distinction, whereas it can only appear within unregulated consciences which elevate to a rule the lack of rule from which they suffer. The doctrine of the most ruthless and swift progress has become an article of faith. But other theories appear parallel with those praising the advantages of instability, which, generalizing the situation that gives them birth, declare life evil, claim that it is richer in grief than in

pleasure and that it attracts men only by false claims. Since this disorder is greatest in the economic world, it has most victims there.

Industrial and commercial functions are really among the occupations which furnish the greatest number of suicides. . . . Almost on a level with the liberal professions, they sometimes surpass them; they are especially more afflicted than agriculture, where the old regulative forces still make their appearance felt most and where the fever of business has least penetrated. Here is best recalled what was once the general constitution of the economic order. And the divergence would be yet greater if, among the suicides of industry, employers were distinguished from workmen, for the former are probably most stricken by the state of anomy. The enormous rate of those with independent means (720 per million) sufficiently shows that the possessors of most comfort suffer most. Everything that enforces subordination attenuates the effects of this state. At least the horizon of the lower classes is limited by those above them, and for this same reason their desires are more modest. Those who have only empty space above them are almost inevitably lost in it, if no force restrains them. . . .

Anomy, therefore, is a regular and specific factor in suicide in our modern societies; one of the springs from which the annual contingent feeds. So we have here a new type to distinguish from the . . . [other types of suicide]. It differs from them in its dependence, not on the way in which individuals are attached to society, but on how it regulates them. Egoistic suicide results from man's no longer finding a basis for existence in life; altruistic suicide, because this basis for existence appears to man situated beyond life itself. The third sort of suicide, the existence of which has just been shown, results from man's activity's lacking regulation and his consequent sufferings. By virtue of its origin we shall assign this last variety the name of *anomic suicide*.

Certainly, this and egoistic suicide have kindred ties. Both spring from society's insufficient presence in individuals. But the sphere of its absence is not the same in both cases. In egoistic suicide it is deficient in truly collective activity, thus depriving the latter of object and meaning. In anomic suicide, society's influence is lacking in the basically individual passions, thus leaving them without a check-rein. In spite of their relationship, therefore, the two types are independent of each other. We may offer society everything social in us, and still be unable to control our desires; one may live in an anomic state without being egoistic, and vice versa. These two sorts of suicide therefore do not draw their chief recruits from the same social environments; one has its principal field among intellectual careers, the world of thought—the other, the industrial or commercial world.

But economic anomy is not the only anomy which may give rise to suicide.

The suicides occurring at the crisis of widowhood, of which we have already spoken, are really due to domestic anomy resulting from the death of husband or wife. A family catastrophe occurs which affects the survivor. He is not adapted to the new situation in which he finds himself and accordingly offers less resistance to suicide. . . .

But another variety of anomic suicide should draw greater attention, both because it is more chronic and because it will serve to illustrate the nature and functions of marriage.

In the *Annales de démographie internationale* (September 1882), Bertillon published a remarkable study of divorce, in which he proved the following proposition: throughout Europe the number of suicides varies with that of divorces and separations. . . .

. . . We shall mention only as a note the explanation Bertillon summarily suggested. According to that author, the number of suicides and that of divorces vary in parallel manner because both depend on the same factor: the greater or less frequency of people with unstable equilibrium. There are actually, he says, more divorces in a country the more incompatible married couples it contains. The latter are recruited especially from among people of irregular lives, persons of poor character and intelligence, whom this temperament predisposes to suicide. The parallelism would then be due, not to the influence of divorce itself upon suicide, but to the fact that these two phenomena derive from a similar cause which they express differently. But this association of divorce with certain psychopathic flaws is made arbitrarily and without proof. There is no reason to think that there are 15 times as many unbalanced people in Switzerland as in Italy and from 6 to 7 times as many as in France, and yet in the first of these countries divorces are 15 times as frequent as in the second and about 7 times as frequent as in the third. Moreover, so far as suicide is concerned, we know how far purely individual conditions are from accounting for it. Furthermore, all that follows will show the inadequacy of this theory.

One must seek the cause of this remarkable relation, not in the organic predispositions of people but in the intrinsic nature of divorce. As our first proposition here we may assert: in all countries for which we have the necessary data, suicides of divorced people are immensely more numerous than those of other portions of the population. . . .

Thus, divorced persons of both sexes kill themselves between three and four times as often as married persons, although younger (40 years in France



as against 46 years), and considerably more often than widowed persons in spite of the aggravation resulting for the latter from their advanced age. What is the explanation?

There is no doubt that the change of moral and material regimen which is a consequence of divorce is of some account in this result. But it does not sufficiently explain the matter. Widowhood is indeed as complete a disturbance of existence as divorce; it usually even has much more unhappy results, since it was not desired by husband and wife, while divorce is usually a deliverance for both. Yet divorced persons who, considering their age, should commit suicide only one half as often as widowed persons, do so more often everywhere, even twice as often in certain countries. This aggravation, to be represented by a coefficient between 2.5 and 4, does not depend on their changed condition in any way.

Let us refer to . . . [the following proposition] to discover the causes of this fact . . . : [that] in a given society the tendency of widowed persons to suicide [is] a function of the corresponding tendency of married persons. While the latter are highly protected, the former enjoy an immunity less, to be sure, but still considerable, and the sex best protected by marriage is also that best protected in the state of widowhood. Briefly, when conjugal society is dissolved by the death of one of the couple, the effects which it had with reference to suicide continue to be felt in part by the survivor. Then, however, is it not to be supposed that the same thing takes place when the marriage is interrupted, not by death, but by a judicial act, and that the aggravation which afflicts divorced persons is a result not of the divorce but of the marriage ended by divorce? It must be connected with some quality of the matrimonial society, the influence of which the couple continue to experience even when separated. If they have so strong an inclination to suicide, it is because they were already strongly inclined to it while living together and by the very effect of their common life.

Admitting so much, the correspondence between divorces and suicides becomes explicable. Actually, among the people where divorce is common, this peculiar effect of marriage in which divorce shares must necessarily be very wide-spread; for it is not confined to households predestined to legal separation. If it reaches its maximum intensity among them, it must also be found among others, or the majority of the others, though to a lesser degree. For just as where there are many suicides, there are many attempted suicides, and just as mortality cannot grow without morbidity increasing simultaneously, so wherever there are many actual divorces there must be many households more or less close to divorce. The number of actual divorces

cannot rise, accordingly, without the family condition predisposing to suicide also developing and becoming general in the same degree, and thus the two phenomena naturally vary in the same general direction.

Not only does this hypothesis agree with everything demonstrated above but it is susceptible of direct proof. Indeed, if it is well-founded, married persons in countries where divorces are numerous must have less immunity against suicide than where marriage is indissoluble. This is the net result of the facts, at least *so far as husbands are concerned*. . . . Italy, a Catholic country in which divorce is unknown, is also the country with the highest coefficient of preservation for husbands; it is less in France, where separations have always been more frequent, and can be seen to diminish as we pass to countries where divorce is more widely practiced. . . .

. . . This is one more proof that the large number of suicides in countries where divorce is widespread has no reference to any organic predisposition, especially to the number of unstable people. For if such were the real cause, it would affect unmarried as well as married men. Now the latter are actually those most affected. The origin of the evil is therefore undoubtedly to be sought, as we have supposed, in some peculiarity either of marriage or of family life. It remains for us to choose between the last two hypotheses. Is the lesser immunity of husbands due to the condition of domestic society or to that of matrimonial society? Is the family morale inferior or the conjugal bond not all that it should be?

A first fact which makes the former explanation improbable is that among peoples where divorce is most frequent the birth-rate is very high and, consequently, the density of the domestic group is also very high. Now we know that where the family is dense, family spirit is usually strong. There is reason to believe, then, that the cause of the phenomenon is to be sought in the nature of marriage.

Actually, if it were imputable to the constitution of the family, wives should also be less protected from suicide in countries where divorce is current than in those where it is rare; for they are as much affected by the poor state of domestic relations as husbands. Exactly the reverse is the truth. The coefficient of preservation of married women rises proportionately to the fall of that of husbands, or in proportion as divorces are more frequent and vice versa. The more often and easily the conjugal bond is broken, the more the wife is favored in comparison with the husband. . . .

The inversion between the two series of coefficients is remarkable. In countries where there is no divorce, the wife is less protected than the husband; but her inferiority is greater in Italy than in France, where the matri-

monial tie has always been more easily broken. On the contrary, wherever divorce is practiced . . . the husband is less protected than the wife, and the latter's advantage increases regularly with the increase in the frequency of divorce. . . .

Accordingly, the following law may be regarded as beyond dispute: *From the standpoint of suicide, marriage is more favorable to the wife the more widely practiced divorce is; and vice versa.*

From this proposition, two consequences flow.

First, only husbands contribute to the rise in the suicide rate observable in societies where divorces are frequent, wives on the contrary committing suicide more rarely than elsewhere. If, then, divorce can only develop with the improvement of woman's moral situation, it cannot be connected with an unfavorable state of domestic society calculated to aggravate the tendency to suicide; for such an aggravation should occur in the case of the wife, as well as of the husband. A lowering of family morale cannot have such opposite effects on the two sexes: it cannot both favor the mother and seriously afflict the father. Consequently, the cause of the phenomenon which we are studying is found in the state of marriage and not in the constitution of the family. And indeed, marriage may very possibly act in an opposite way on husband and wife. For though they have the same object as parents, as partners their interests are different and often hostile. In certain societies therefore, some peculiarity of the matrimonial institution may very well benefit one and harm the other. All of the above tends to show that this is precisely the case with divorce.

Secondly, for the same reason we have to reject the hypothesis that this unfortunate state of marriage, with which divorces and suicides are closely connected, is simply caused by more frequent domestic disputes; for no such cause could increase the woman's immunity, any more than could the loosening of the family tie. If, where divorce is common, the number of suicides really depends on the number of conjugal disputes, the wife should suffer from them as much as the husband. There is nothing in this situation to afford her exceptional immunity. The hypothesis is the less tenable since divorce is usually asked for by the wife from the husband (in France, 60 per cent of divorces and 83 per cent of separations). Accordingly, domestic troubles are most often attributable to the man. Then, however, it would not be clear why, in countries of frequent divorce, the husband kills himself with greater frequency because he causes his wife more suffering, and the wife kills herself less often because her husband makes her suffer more. Nor is it

proven that the number of conjugal dissensions increases in the same measure with divorce.

If we discard this hypothesis, only one other remains possible. The institution of divorce must itself cause suicide through its effect on marriage.

After all, what is marriage? A regulation of sexual relations, including not merely the physical instincts which this intercourse involves but the feelings of every sort gradually engrafted by civilization on the foundation of physical desire. For among us love is a far more mental than organic fact. A man looks to a woman, not merely to the satisfaction of the sexual impulse. Though this natural proclivity has been the germ of all sexual evolution, it has become increasingly complicated with aesthetic and moral feelings, numerous and varied, and today it is only the smallest element of the total complex process to which it has given birth. Under the influence of these intellectual elements it has itself been partially freed from its physical nature and assumed something like an intellectual one. Moral reasons as well as physical needs impel love. Hence, it no longer has the regular, automatic periodicity which it displays in animals. A psychological impulse may awaken it at any time: it is not seasonal. But just because these various inclinations, thus changed, do not directly depend upon organic necessities, social regulation becomes necessary. They must be restrained by society since the organism has no means of restraining them. This is the function of marriage. It completely regulates the life of passion, and monogamic marriage more strictly than any other. For by forcing a man to attach himself forever to the same woman it assigns a strictly definite object to the need for love, and closes the horizon.

This determination is what forms the state of moral equilibrium from which the husband benefits. Being unable to seek other satisfactions than those permitted, without transgressing his duty, he restricts his desires to them. The salutary discipline to which he is subjected makes it his duty to find his happiness in his lot, and by doing so supplies him with the means. Besides, if his passion is forbidden to stray, its fixed object is forbidden to fail him; the obligation is reciprocal. Though his enjoyment is restricted, it is assured and this certainty forms his mental foundation. The lot of the unmarried man is different. As he has the right to form attachment wherever inclination leads him, he aspires to everything and is satisfied with nothing. This morbid desire for the infinite which everywhere accompanies anomy may as readily assail this as any other part of our consciousness; it very often assumes a sexual form which was described by Musset. When one is no



longer checked, one becomes unable to check one's self. Beyond experienced pleasures one senses and desires others; if one happens almost to have exhausted the range of what is possible, one dreams of the impossible; one thirsts for the non-existent. How can the feelings not be exacerbated by such unending pursuit? For them to reach that state, one need not even have infinitely multiplied the experiences of love and lived the life of a Don Juan. The humdrum existence of the ordinary bachelor suffices. New hopes constantly awake, only to be deceived, leaving a trail of weariness and disillusionment behind them. How can desire, then, become fixed, being uncertain that it can retain what it attracts; for the anomy is twofold. Just as the person makes no definitive gift of himself, he has definitive title to nothing. The uncertainty of the future plus his own indeterminateness therefore condemns him to constant change. The result of it all is a state of disturbance, agitation and discontent which inevitably increases the possibilities of suicide.

Now divorce implies a weakening of matrimonial regulation. Where it exists, and especially where law and custom permit its excessive practice, marriage is nothing but a weakened simulacrum of itself; it is an inferior form of marriage. It cannot produce its useful effects to the same degree. Its restraint upon desire is weakened; since it is more easily disturbed and superseded, it controls passion less and passion tends to rebel. It consents less readily to its assigned limit. The moral calmness and tranquillity which were the husband's strength are less; they are replaced to some extent by an uneasiness which keeps a man from being satisfied with what he has. Besides, he is the less inclined to become attached to his present state as his enjoyment of it is not completely sure: the future is less certain. One cannot be strongly restrained by a chain which may be broken on one side or the other at any moment. One cannot help looking beyond one's own position when the ground underfoot does not feel secure. Hence, in the countries where marriage is strongly tempered by divorce, the immunity of the married man is inevitably less. As he resembles the unmarried under this regime, he inevitably loses some of his own advantages. Consequently, the total number of suicides rises.

But this consequence of divorce is peculiar to the man and does not affect the wife. Woman's sexual needs have less of a mental character because, generally speaking, her mental life is less developed. These needs are more closely related to the needs of the organism, following rather than leading them, and consequently find in them an efficient restraint. Being a more instinctive creature than man, woman has only to follow her instincts to find calmness and peace. She thus does not require so strict a social regula-

tion as marriage, and particularly as monogamic marriage. Even when useful such a discipline has its inconveniences. By fixing the conjugal state permanently, it prevents all retreat, regardless of consequences. By limiting the horizon, it closes all egress and forbids even legitimate hope. Man himself doubtless suffers from this immutability; but for him the evil is largely compensated by the advantages he gains in other respects. Custom, moreover, grants him certain privileges which allow him in some measure to lessen the strictness of the regime. There is no compensation or relief for the woman. Monogamy is strictly obligatory for her, with no qualification of any sort, and on the other hand, marriage is not in the same degree useful to her for limiting her desires, which are naturally limited, and for teaching her to be contented with her lot; but it prevents her from changing it if it becomes intolerable. The regulation therefore is a restraint to her without any great advantages. Consequently, everything that makes it more flexible and lighter can only better the wife's situation. So divorce protects her and she has frequent recourse to it.

The state of conjugal anomy, produced by the institution of divorce, thus explains the parallel development of divorces and suicides. Accordingly, the suicides of husbands which increase the number of voluntary deaths in countries where there are many divorces, form a division of anomic suicide. They are not the result of the existence of more bad husbands or bad wives in these societies, that is, of more unhappy households. They result from a moral structure *sui generis*, itself caused by a weakening of matrimonial regulation. This structure, established by marriage, by surviving it produces the exceptional tendency to suicide shown by divorced men. But we do not mean that this enervation of the regulation is created out of whole cloth by the legal establishment of divorce. Divorce is never granted except out of respect for a pre-existing state of customs. If the public conscience had not gradually decided that the indissolubility of the conjugal bond is unreasonable, no legislator would ever have thought of making it easier to break up. Matrimonial anomy may therefore exist in public opinion even without being inscribed in law. On the other hand, only when it has assumed a legal form, can it produce all its consequences. So long as the marriage law is unmodified, it at least serves considerably to restrict the passions; above all, it opposes the increase of the taste for anomy merely by reproof. That is why anomy has pronounced and readily recognizable effects only where it has become a legal institution. . . .

Furthermore, it does seem that at a certain time of life man is affected by marriage in the same way as woman, though for different reasons. If, as

we have shown, very young husbands kill themselves much more often than unmarried men of the same age, it is doubtless because their passions are too vehement at that period and too self-confident to be subjected to so severe a rule. Accordingly, this rule seems to them an unendurable obstacle against which their desire dashes and is broken. This is probably why marriage produces all its beneficent effects only when age, supervening, tempers man somewhat and makes him feel the need of discipline.

Finally . . . where marriage favors the wife rather than the husband, the difference between the sexes is always less than when the reverse is true. This proves that, even in those societies where the status of matrimony is wholly in the woman's favor, it does her less service than it does man where it is he that profits more by it. Woman can suffer more from marriage if it is unfavorable to her than she can benefit by it if it conforms to her interest. This is because she has less need of it. . . .

Thus we reach a conclusion quite different from the current idea of marriage and its role. It is supposed to have been originated for the wife, to protect her weakness against masculine caprice. Monogamy, especially, is often represented as a sacrifice made by man of his polygamous instincts, to raise and improve woman's condition in marriage. Actually, whatever historical causes may have made him accept this restriction, he benefits more by it. The liberty he thus renounces could only be a source of torment to him. Women did not have the same reasons to abandon it and, in this sense, we may say that by submitting to the same rule, it was she who made a sacrifice.<sup>1</sup>. . .

### *Book III: General Nature of Suicide as a Social Phenomenon*

#### CHAPTER I: THE SOCIAL ELEMENT OF SUICIDE

. . . The individual conditions on which suicide might, *a priori*, be supposed to depend, are of two sorts.

There is first the external situation of the agent. Sometimes men who kill

<sup>1</sup> The above considerations show that there is a type of suicide, the opposite of anomic suicide, just as egoistic and altruistic suicides are opposites. It is the suicide deriving from excessive regulation, that of persons with futures pitilessly blocked and passions violently choked by oppressive disciplines. It is the suicide of very young husbands, of the married woman who is childless. So, for completeness' sake, we should set up a fourth suicidal type. . . . Do not the suicides of slaves, said to be frequent under certain conditions . . . belong to this type, or all suicides attributable to excessive physical or moral despotism? To bring out the ineluctable and inflexible nature of a rule against which there is no appeal, and in contrast with the expression "anomy" which has just been used, we might call it *fatalistic suicide*.

themselves have had family sorrow or disappointments to their pride, sometimes they have had to suffer poverty or sickness, at others they have had some moral fault with which to reproach themselves, etc. But we have seen that these individual peculiarities could not explain the social suicide-rate; for the latter varies in considerable proportions, whereas the different combinations of circumstances which constitute the immediate antecedents of individual cases of suicide retain approximately the same relative frequency. They are therefore not the determining causes of the act which they precede. Their occasionally important role in the premeditation of suicide is no proof of being a causal one. Human deliberations, in fact, so far as reflective consciousness affects them are often only purely formal, with no object but confirmation of a resolve previously formed for reasons unknown to consciousness.

Besides, the circumstances are almost infinite in number which are supposed to cause suicide because they rather frequently accompany it. One man kills himself in the midst of affluence, another in the lap of poverty; one was unhappy in his home, and another had just ended by divorce a marriage which was making him unhappy. In one case a soldier ends his life after having been punished for an offense he did not commit; in another, a criminal whose crime has remained unpunished kills himself. The most varied and even the most contradictory events of life may equally serve as pretexts for suicide. This suggests that none of them is the specific cause. Could we perhaps at least ascribe causality to those qualities known to be common to all? But are there any such? At best one might say that they usually consist of disappointments, of sorrows, without any possibility of deciding how intense the grief must be to have such tragic significance. Of no disappointment in life, no matter how insignificant, can we say in advance that it could not possibly make existence intolerable; and, on the other hand, there is none which must necessarily have this effect. We see some men resist horrible misfortune, while others kill themselves after slight troubles. Moreover, we have shown that those who suffer most are not those who kill themselves most. Rather it is too great comfort which turns a man against himself. Life is most readily renounced at the time and among the classes where it is least harsh. At least, if it really sometimes occurs that the victim's personal situation is the effective cause of his resolve such cases are very rare indeed and accordingly cannot explain the social suicide-rate.

Accordingly, even those who have ascribed most influence to individual conditions have sought these conditions less in such external incidents than in the intrinsic nature of the person, that is, his biological constitution and



the physical concomitants on which it depends. Thus, suicide has been represented as the product of a certain temperament, an episode of neurasthenia, subject to the effects of the same factors as neurasthenia. Yet we have found no immediate and regular relationship between neurasthenia and the social suicide-rate. The two facts even vary at times in inverse proportion to one another, one being at its minimum just when and where the other is at its height. We have not found, either, any definite relation between the variations of suicide and the conditions of physical environment supposed to have most effect on the nervous system, such as race, climate, temperature. Obviously, though the neuropath may show some inclination to suicide under certain conditions, he is not necessarily destined to kill himself; and the influence of cosmic factors is not enough to determine in just this sense the very general tendencies of his nature.

Wholly different are the results we obtained when we forgot the individual and sought the causes of the suicidal aptitude of each society in the nature of the societies themselves. The relations of suicide to certain states of social environment are as direct and constant as its relations to facts of a biological and physical character were seen to be uncertain and ambiguous. Here at last we are face to face with real laws, allowing us to attempt a methodical classification of types of suicide. The sociological causes thus determined by us have even explained these various concurrences often attributed to the influence of material causes, and in which a proof of this influence has been sought. If women kill themselves much less often than men, it is because they are much less involved than men in collective existence; thus they feel its influence—good or evil—less strongly. So it is with old persons and children, though for other reasons. Finally, if suicide increases from January to June but then decreases, it is because social activity shows similar seasonal fluctuations. It is therefore natural that the different effects of social activity should be subject to an identical rhythm, and consequently be more pronounced during the former of these two periods. Suicide is one of them.

The conclusion from all these facts is that the social suicide-rate can be explained only sociologically. At any given moment the moral constitution of society establishes the contingent of voluntary deaths. There is, therefore, for each people a collective force of a definite amount of energy, impelling men to self-destruction. The victim's acts which at first seem to express only his personal temperament are really the supplement and prolongation of a social condition which they express externally.

. . . It is not mere metaphor to say of each human society that it has a

greater or lesser aptitude for suicide; the expression is based on the nature of things. Each social group really has a collective inclination for the act, quite its own, and the source of all individual inclinations, rather than their result. It is made up of the currents of egoism, altruism or anomy running through the society under consideration with the tendencies to languorous melancholy, active renunciation or exasperated weariness derivative from these currents. These tendencies of the whole social body, by affecting individuals, cause them to commit suicide. The private experiences usually thought to be the proximate causes of suicide have only the influence borrowed from the victim's moral predisposition, itself an echo of the moral state of society. To explain his detachment from life the individual accuses his most immediately surrounding circumstances; life is sad to him because he is sad. Of course his sadness comes to him from without in one sense, however not from one or another incident of his career but rather from the group to which he belongs. This is why there is nothing which cannot serve as an occasion for suicide. It all depends on the intensity with which suicidogenetic causes have affected the individual. . . .

Let us make an effort to grasp the meaning and import of the terms just employed.

Usually when collective tendencies or passions are spoken of, we tend to regard these expressions as mere metaphors and manners of speech with no real signification but a sort of average among a certain number of individual states. They are not considered as things, forces, *sui generis* which dominate the consciousness of single individuals. None the less this is their nature, as is brilliantly shown by statistics of suicide. The individuals making up a society change from year to year, yet the number of suicides is the same so long as the society itself does not change. The population of Paris renews itself very rapidly; yet the share of Paris in the total of French suicides remains practically the same. Although only a few years suffice to change completely the personnel of the army, the rate of military suicides varies only very slowly in a given nation. In all countries the evolution of collective life follows a given rhythm throughout the year; it grows from January to about July and then diminishes. Thus, though the members of the several European societies spring from widely different average types, the seasonal and even monthly variations of suicide take place in accordance with the same law. Likewise, regardless of the diversity of individual temperaments, the relation between the aptitude for suicide of married persons and that of widowers and widows is identically the same in widely differing social

groups, from the simple fact that the moral condition of widowhood everywhere bears the same relation to the moral constitution characteristic of marriage. The causes which thus fix the contingent of voluntary deaths for a given society or one part of it must then be independent of individuals, since they retain the same intensity no matter what particular persons they operate on. One would think that an unchanging manner of life would produce unchanging effects. This is true; but a way of life is something, and its unchanging character requires explanation. If a way of life is unchanged while changes occur constantly among those who practise it, it cannot derive its entire reality from them.

It has been thought that this conclusion might be avoided through the observation that this very continuity was the work of individuals and that consequently, to account for it there was no need to ascribe to social phenomena a sort of transcendency in relation to individual life. Actually, it has been said, "anything social, whether a word of a language, a religious rite, an artisan's skill, an artistic method, a legal statute or a moral maxim is transmitted and passes from an individual parent, teacher, friend, neighbor, or comrade to another individual."

Doubtless if we had only to explain the general way in which an idea or sentiment passes from one generation to another, how it is that the memory of it is not lost, this explanation might as a last resort be considered satisfactory. But the transmission of facts such as suicide and, more broadly speaking, such as the various acts reported by moral statistics, has a very special nature not to be so readily accounted for. It relates, in fact, not merely in general to a certain way of acting, *but to the number of cases in which this way of acting is employed*. Not merely are there suicides every year, but there are as a general rule as many each year as in the year preceding. The state of mind which causes men to kill themselves is not purely and simply transmitted, but—something much more remarkable—transmitted to an equal number of persons, all in such situations as to make the state of mind become an act. How can this be if only individuals are concerned? The number as such cannot be directly transmitted. Today's population has not learned from yesterday's the size of the contribution it must make to suicide; nevertheless, it will make one of identical size with that of the past, unless circumstances change.

Are we then to imagine that, in some way, each suicide had as his initiator and teacher one of the victims of the year before and that he is something like his moral heir? Only thus can one conceive the possibility that the social suicide-rate is perpetuated by way of inter-individual traditions. For if the

total figure cannot be transmitted as a whole, the units composing it must be transmitted singly. According to this idea, each suicide would have received his tendency from some one of his predecessors and each act of suicide would be something like the echo of a preceding one. But not a fact exists to permit the assumption of such a personal filiation between each of these moral occurrences statistically registered this year, for example, and a similar event of the year before. As has been shown above, it is quite exceptional for an act to be inspired in this way by another of like nature. Besides, why should these ricochets occur regularly from year to year? Why should the generating act require a year to produce its counterpart? Finally, why should it inspire a single copy only? For surely each model must be reproduced only once on the average, or the total would not be constant. Such an hypothesis, as arbitrary as it is difficult to conceive, we need discuss no longer. But if it is dropped, if the numerical equality of annual contingents does not result from each particular case producing its counterpart in the ensuing period, it can only be due to the permanent action of some impersonal cause which transcends all individual cases.

The terms therefore must be strictly understood. Collective tendencies have an existence of their own; they are forces as real as cosmic forces, though of another sort; they, likewise, affect the individual from without, though through other channels. The proof that the reality of collective tendencies is no less than that of cosmic forces is that this reality is demonstrated in the same way, by the uniformity of effects. When we find that the number of deaths varies little from year to year, we explain this regularity by saying that mortality depends on the climate, the temperature, the nature of the soil, in brief on a certain number of material forces which remain constant through changing generations because independent of individuals. Since, therefore, moral acts such as suicide are reproduced not merely with an equal but with a greater uniformity, we must likewise admit that they depend on forces external to individuals. Only, since these forces must be of a moral order and since, except for individual men, there is no other moral order of existence in the world but society, they must be social. But whatever they are called, the important thing is to recognize their reality and conceive of them as a totality of forces which cause us to act from without, like the physico-chemical forces to which we react. So truly are they things *sui generis* and not mere verbal entities that they may be measured, their relative sizes compared, as is done with the intensity of electric currents or luminous foci. Thus, the basic proposition that social facts are objective, a proposition . . . which we consider the fundamental principle of the socio-



logical method, finds a new and especially conclusive proof in moral statistics and above all in the statistics of suicide. Of course, it offends common sense. But science has encountered incredulity whenever it has revealed to men the existence of a force that has been overlooked. Since the system of accepted ideas must be modified to make room for the new order of things and to establish new concepts, men's minds resist through mere inertia. Yet this understanding must be reached. If there is such a science as sociology, it can only be the study of a world hitherto unknown, different from those explored by the other sciences. This world is nothing if not a system of realities.

But just because it encounters traditional prejudices this conception has aroused objections to which we must reply.

First, it implies that collective tendencies and thoughts are of a different nature from individual tendencies and thoughts, that the former have characteristics which the latter lack. How can this be, it is objected, since there are only individuals in society? But, reasoning thus, we should have to say that there is nothing more in animate nature than inorganic matter, since the cell is made exclusively of inanimate atoms. To be sure, it is likewise true that society has no other active forces than individuals; but individuals by combining form a psychical existence of a new species, which consequently has its own manner of thinking and feeling. Of course the elementary qualities of which the social fact consists are present in germ in individual minds. But the social fact emerges from them only when they have been transformed by association since it is only then that it appears. Association itself is also an active factor productive of special effects. In itself it is therefore something new. When the consciousness of individuals, instead of remaining isolated, becomes grouped and combined, something in the world has been altered. Naturally this change produces others, this novelty engenders other novelties, phenomena appear whose characteristic qualities are not found in the elements composing them.

This proposition could only be opposed by agreeing that a whole is qualitatively identical with the sum of its parts, that an effect is qualitatively reducible to the sum of its productive causes; which amounts to denying all change or to making it inexplicable. Someone has, however, gone so far as to sustain this extreme thesis, but only two truly extraordinary reasons have been found for its defense. First, it has been said that "in sociology we have through a rare privilege intimate knowledge both of that element which is our individual consciousness and of the compound which is the sum of consciousness in individuals"; secondly, that through this twofold

introspection "we clearly ascertain that if the individual is subtracted nothing remains of the social."

The first assertion is a bold denial of all contemporary psychology. Today it is generally recognized that psychical life, far from being directly cognizable, has on the contrary profound depths inaccessible to ordinary perception, to which we attain only gradually by devious and complicated paths like those employed by the sciences of the external world. The nature of consciousness is therefore far from lacking in mystery for the future. The second proposition is purely arbitrary. The author may of course state that in his personal opinion nothing real exists in society but what is individual, but proofs supporting this statement are lacking and discussion is therefore impossible. It would be only too easy to oppose to this the contrary feeling of a great many persons, who conceive of society not as the form spontaneously assumed by individual nature on expanding outwardly, but as an antagonistic force restricting individual natures and resisted by them! What a remarkable intuition it is, by the way, that lets us know directly and without intermediary both the element—the individual—and the compound, society? If we had really only to open our eyes and take a good look to perceive at once the laws of the social world, sociology would be useless or, at least very simple. Unfortunately, facts show only too clearly the incompetence of consciousness in this matter. Never would consciousness have dreamt, of its own accord, of the necessity which annually reproduces demographic phenomena in equal numbers, had it not received a suggestion from without. Still less can it discover their causes, if left to its own devices.

But by separating social from individual life in this manner, we do not mean that there is nothing psychical about the former. On the contrary, it is clear that essentially social life is made up of representations. Only these collective representations are of quite another character from those of the individual. We see no objection to calling sociology a variety of psychology, if we carefully add that social psychology has its own laws which are not those of individual psychology. An example will make the thought perfectly clear. Usually the origin of religion is ascribed to feelings of fear or reverence inspired in conscious persons by mysterious and dreaded beings; from this point of view, religion seems merely like the development of individual states of mind and private feelings. But this over-simplified explanation has no relation to facts. It is enough to note that the institution of religion is unknown to the animal kingdom, where social life is always very rudimentary, that it is never found except where a collective organization

exists, that it varies with the nature of societies, in order to conclude justifiably that exclusively men in groups think along religious lines. The individual would never have risen to the conception of forces which so immeasurably surpass him and all his surroundings, had he known nothing but himself and the physical universe. Not even the great natural forces to which he has relations could have suggested such a notion to him; for he was originally far from having his present knowledge of the extent of their dominance; on the contrary, he then believed that he could control them under certain conditions. Science taught him how much he was their inferior. The power thus imposed on his respect and become the object of his adoration is society, of which the gods were only the hypostatic form. Religion is in a word the system of symbols by means of which society becomes conscious of itself; it is the characteristic way of thinking of collective existence. Here then is a great group of states of mind which would not have originated if individual states of consciousness had not combined, and which result from this union and are superadded to those which derive from individual natures. In spite of the minutest possible analysis of the latter, they will never serve to explain the foundation and development of the strange beliefs and practices from which sprang totemism, the origin of naturism from it and how naturism itself became on the one hand the abstract religion of Jahwe, on the other, the polytheism of the Greeks and Romans, etc. All we mean by affirming the distinction between the social and the individual is that the above observations apply not only to religion, but to law, morals, customs, political institutions, pedagogical practices, etc., in a word to all forms of collective life.

Another objection has been made, at first glance apparently more serious. Not only have we admitted that the social states of mind are qualitatively different from individual ones, but that they are in a sense exterior to individuals. We have not even hesitated to compare this quality of being external with that of physical forces. But, it is objected, since there is nothing in society except individuals, how could there be anything external to them?

If the objection were well founded we should face an antinomy. For we must not lose sight of what has been proved already. Since the handful of people who kill themselves annually do not form a natural group, and are not in communication with one another, the stable number of suicides can only be due to the influence of a common cause which dominates and survives the individual persons involved. The force uniting the conglomerate multitude of individual cases, scattered over the face of the earth, must necessarily be external to each of them. If it were really impossible for it to

be so, the problem would be insoluble. But the impossibility is only apparent.

First, it is not true that society is made up only of individuals; it also includes material things, which play an essential role in the common life. The social fact is sometimes so far materialized as to become an element of the external world. For instance, a definite type of architecture is a social phenomenon; but it is partially embodied in houses and buildings of all sorts which, once constructed, become autonomous realities, independent of individuals. It is the same with the avenues of communication and transportation, with instruments and machines used in industry or private life which express the state of technology at any moment in history, of written language, etc. Social life, which is thus crystallized, as it were, and fixed on material supports, is by just so much externalized, and acts upon us from without. Avenues of communication which have been constructed before our time give a definite direction to our activities, depending on whether they connect us with one or another country. A child's taste is formed as he comes into contact with the monuments of national taste bequeathed by previous generations. At times such monuments even disappear and are forgotten for centuries, then, one day when the nations which reared them are long since extinct, reappear and begin a new existence in the midst of new societies. This is the character of those very social phenomena called *Renaissances*. A *Renaissance* is a portion of social life which, after being, so to speak, deposited in material things and remained long latent there, suddenly reawakens and alters the intellectual and moral orientation of peoples who had no share in its construction. Doubtless it could not be reanimated if living centers of consciousness did not exist to receive its influence; but these individual conscious centers would have thought and felt quite differently if this influence were not present.

The same remark applies to the definite formulae into which the dogmas of faith are precipitated, or legal precepts when they become fixed externally in a consecrated form. However well digested, they would of course remain dead letters if there were no one to conceive their significance and put them into practice. But though they are not self-sufficient, they are none the less in their own way factors of social activity. They have a manner of action of their own. Juridical relations are widely different depending on whether or not the law is written. Where there is a constituted code, jurisprudence is more regular but less flexible, legislation more uniform but also more rigid. Legislation adapts itself less readily to a variety of individual cases, and resists innovations more strongly. The material forms it assumes are thus not merely ineffective verbal combinations but active realities, since



they produce effects which would not occur without their existence. They are not only external to individual consciousness, but this very externality establishes their specific qualities. Because these forms are less at the disposal of individuals, individuals cannot readily adjust them to circumstances, and this very situation makes them more resistant to change.

Of course it is true that not all social consciousness achieves such externalization and materialization. Not all the aesthetic spirit of a nation is embodied in the works it inspires; not all of morality is formulated in clear precepts. The greater part is diffused. There is a large collective life which is at liberty; all sorts of currents come, go, circulate everywhere, cross and mingle in a thousand different ways, and just because they are constantly mobile are never crystallized in an objective form. Today, a breath of sadness and discouragement descends on society; tomorrow, one of joyous confidence will uplift all hearts. For a while the whole group is swayed towards individualism; a new period begins and social and philanthropic aims become paramount. Yesterday cosmopolitanism was the rage, today patriotism has the floor. And all these eddies, all these fluxes and refluxes occur without a single modification of the main legal and moral precepts, immobilized in their sacrosanct forms. Besides, these very precepts merely express a whole sub-jacent life of which they partake; they spring from it but do not supplant it. Beneath all these maxims are actual, living sentiments, summed up by these formulae but only as in a superficial envelope. The formulae would awake no echo if they did not correspond to definite emotions and impressions scattered through society. If, then, we ascribe a kind of reality to them, we do not dream of supposing them to be the whole of moral reality. That would be to take the sign for the thing signified. A sign is certainly something; it is not a kind of supererogatory epiphenomenon; its role in intellectual development is known today. But after all it is only a sign.

But because this part of collective life has not enough consistency to become fixed, it none the less has the same character as the formulated precepts of which we were just speaking. *It is external to each average individual taken singly.* Suppose some great public danger arouses a gust of patriotic feeling. A collective impulse follows, by virtue of which society as a whole assumes axiomatically that private interests, even those usually regarded most highly, must be wholly effaced before the common interest. And the principle is not merely uttered as an *ideal*; if need be it is literally applied. Meanwhile, take a careful look at the average body of individuals. Among very many of them you will recapture something of this moral state of mind, though infinitely attenuated. The men who are ready to make

freely so complete a self-abnegation are rare, even in time of war. *Therefore there is not one of all the single centers of consciousness who make up the great body of the nation, to whom the collective current is not almost wholly exterior, since each contains only a spark of it.*

The same thing is observable in respect to even the stablest, most fundamental moral sentiments. Every society, for example, has a respect for the life of man in general, the intensity of which is determined by and commensurate with, the relative weight of the penalties attached to homicide. The average man, on the other hand, certainly feels something of the same sort, but far less and in a quite different way from society. To appreciate this difference, we need only compare the emotion one may individually feel at sight of the murderer or even of the murder, and that which seizes assembled crowds under the same circumstances. We know how far they may be carried if unchecked. It is because, in this case, anger is collective. The same difference constantly appears between the manner in which society resents these crimes and the way in which they affect individuals; that is, between the individual and the social form of the sentiment offended. Social indignation is so strong that it is very often satisfied only by supreme expiation. The private person, however, provided that the victim is unknown or of no interest to him, that the criminal does not live near and thus constitute a personal threat to him, though thinking it proper for the crime to be punished, is not strongly enough stirred to feel a real need for vengeance. He will not take a step to discover the guilty one; he will even hesitate to give him up. Only when public opinion is aroused, as the saying goes, does the matter take on a different aspect. Then we become more active and demanding. But it is opinion speaking through us; we act under the pressure of the collectivity, not as individuals.

Indeed, the distance between the social state and its individual repercussions is usually even greater. In the above case, the collective sentiment, in becoming individualized, retained, at least among most people, strength enough to resist acts by which it is offended; horror at the shedding of human blood is sufficiently deeply enrooted in most consciences today to prevent the outburst of homicidal thoughts. But mere misappropriation, quiet, non-violent fraud, are far from inspiring us with equal aversion. Not many have enough respect for another's rights to stifle in the germ every wish to enrich themselves fraudulently. Not that education does not develop a certain distaste for all unjust actions. But what a difference between this vague, hesitant feeling, ever ready for compromise, and the categorical, unreserved and open stigma with which society punishes theft in all shapes! And what

of so many other duties still less rooted in the ordinary man, such as the one that bids us contribute our just share to public expense, not to defraud the public treasury, not to try to avoid military service, to execute contracts faithfully, etc.? If morality in all these respects were only guaranteed by the uncertain feelings of the average conscience, it would be extremely unprotected.

So it is a profound mistake to confuse the collective type of a society, as is so often done, with the average type of its individual members. The morality of the average man is of only moderate intensity. He possesses only the most indispensable ethical principles to any decided degree, and even they are far from being as precise and authoritative as in the collective type, that is, in society as a whole. This, which is the very mistake committed by Quételet, makes the origin of morality an insoluble problem. For since the individual is in general not outstanding, how has a morality so far surpassing him succeeded in establishing itself, if it expresses only the average of individual temperaments? Barring a miracle, the greater cannot arise from the lesser. If the common conscience is nothing but the most general conscience, it cannot rise above the vulgar level. But then whence come the lofty, clearly imperative precepts which society undertakes to teach its children, and respect for which it enforces upon its members? With good reason, religions and many philosophies with them have regarded morality as deriving its total reality only from God. For the pallid, inadequate sketch of it contained in individual consciences cannot be regarded as the original type. This sketch seems rather the result of a crude, unfaithful reproduction, the model for which must therefore exist somewhere outside individuals. This is why the popular imagination, with its customary over-simplicity, assigns it to God. Science certainly could waste no time over this conception, of which it does not even take cognizance. Only, without it no alternative exists but to leave morality hanging unexplained in the air or make it a system of collective states of conscience. Morality either springs from nothing given in the world of experience, or it springs from society. It can only exist in a conscience; therefore, if it is not in the individual conscience it is in that of the group. But then it must be admitted that the latter, far from being confused with the average conscience, everywhere surpasses it.

Observation thus confirms our hypothesis. The regularity of statistical data, on the one hand, implies the existence of collective tendencies exterior to the individual, and on the other, we can directly establish this exterior character in a considerable number of important cases. Besides, this exteriority is not in the least surprising for anyone who knows the difference

between individual and social states of consciousness. By definition, indeed, the latter can reach none of us except from without, since they do not flow from our personal predispositions. Since they consist of elements foreign to us they express something other than ourselves. To be sure in so far as we are solidary with the group and share its life, we are exposed to their influence; but so far as we have a distinct personality of our own we rebel against and try to escape them. Since everyone leads this sort of double existence simultaneously, each of us has a double impulse. We are drawn in a social direction and tend to follow the inclinations of our own natures. So the rest of society weighs upon us as a restraint to our centrifugal tendencies, and we for our part share in this weight upon others for the purpose of neutralizing theirs. We ourselves undergo the pressure we help to exert upon others. Two antagonistic forces confront each other. One, the collective force, tries to take possession of the individual; the other, the individual force, repulses it. To be sure, the former is much stronger than the latter, since it is made of a combination of all the individual forces; but as it also encounters as many resistances as there are separate persons, it is partially exhausted in these multifarious contests and reaches us disfigured and enfeebled. When it is very strong, when the circumstances activating it are of frequent recurrence, it may still leave a deep impression on individuals; it arouses in them mental states of some vivacity which, once formed, function with the spontaneity of instinct; this happens in the case of the most essential moral ideas. But most social currents are either too weak or too intermittently in contact with us to strike deep roots in us; their action is superficial. Consequently, they remain almost completely external. Hence, the proper way to measure any element of a collective type is not to measure its magnitude within individual consciences and to take the average of them all. Rather, it is their sum that must be taken. Even this method of evaluation would be much below reality, for this would give us only the social sentiment reduced by all its losses through individuation.

So there is some superficiality about attacking our conception as scholasticism and reproaching it for assigning to social phenomena a foundation in some vital principle or other of a new sort. We refuse to accept that these phenomena have as a substratum the conscience of the individual, we assign them another; that formed by all the individual consciences in union and combination. There is nothing substantial or ontological about this substratum, since it is merely a whole composed of parts. But it is just as real, nevertheless, as the elements that make it up; for they are constituted in this very way. They are compounds, too. It is known today that the ego



is the resultant of a multitude of conscious states outside the ego; that each of these elementary states, in turn, is the product of unconscious vital units, just as each vital unit is itself due to an association of inanimate particles. Therefore if the psychologist and the biologist correctly regard the phenomena of their study as well founded, merely through the fact of their connection with a combination of elements of the next lower order, why should it not be the same in sociology? Only those have the right to consider such a basis inadequate who have not renounced the hypothesis of a vital force and of a substantive soul. Nothing is more reasonable, then, than this proposition at which such offense has been taken; that a belief or social practice may exist independently of its individual expressions. We clearly did not imply by this that society can exist without individuals, an obvious absurdity we might have been spared having attributed to us. But we did mean: 1. that the group formed by associated individuals has a reality of a different sort from each individual considered singly; 2. that collective states exist in the group from whose nature they spring, before they affect the individual as such and establish in him in a new form a purely inner existence.

Such a way of considering the individual's relations to society also recalls the idea assigned to the individual's relations with the species or the race by contemporary zoologists. The very simple theory has been increasingly abandoned that the species is only an individual perpetuated chronologically and generalized spatially. Indeed it conflicts with the fact that the variations produced in a single instance become specific only in very rare and possibly doubtful cases. The distinctive characteristics of the race change in the individual only as they change in the race in general. The latter has therefore some reality whence come the various shapes it assumes among individual beings, far from its consisting simply of a generalization of these beings. We naturally cannot regard these doctrines as finally demonstrated. But it is enough for us to show that our sociological conceptions, without being borrowed from another order of research, are indeed not without analogies to the most positive sciences.

Let us apply these ideas to the question of suicide. . . .

No moral idea exists which does not combine in proportions varying with the society involved, egoism, altruism and a certain anomy. For social life assumes both that the individual has a certain personality, that he is ready to surrender it if the community requires, and finally, that he is to a certain degree sensitive to ideas of progress. This is why there is no people among

whom these three currents of opinion do not co-exist, bending men's inclinations in three different and even opposing directions. Where they offset one another, the moral agent is in a state of equilibrium which shelters him against any thought of suicide. But let one of them exceed a certain strength to the detriment of the others, and as it becomes individualized, it also becomes suicidogenetic, for the reasons assigned.

Of course, the stronger it is, the more agents it contaminates deeply enough to influence them to suicide, and inversely. But this very strength can depend only on the three following sorts of causes: 1. the nature of the individuals composing the society; 2. the manner of their association, that is, the nature of the social organization; 3. the transitory occurrences which disturb the functioning of the collective life without changing its anatomical constitution, such as national crises, economic crises, etc. As for the individual qualities, they can play a role only if they exist in all persons. For strictly personal ones or those of only small minorities are lost in the mass of the others; besides, from their differences from one another they neutralize one another and are mutually eradicated during the elaboration resulting in the collective phenomenon. Only general human characteristics, accordingly, can have any effect. Now these are practically immutable; at least, their change would require more centuries than the life of one nation can occupy. So the social conditions on which the number of suicides depends are the only ones in terms of which it can vary; for they are the only variable conditions. This is why the number of suicides remains stable as long as society does not change. This stability does not exist because the state of mind which generates suicide is found through some chance in a definite number of individuals who transmit it, for no recognizable reason, to an equal number who will imitate the act. It exists because the impersonal causes which gave it birth and which sustain it are the same. It is because nothing has occurred to modify either the grouping of the social units or the nature of their concurrence. The actions and reactions interchanged among them therefore remain the same; and so the ideas and feelings springing from them cannot vary.

To be sure, it is very rare, if not impossible, for one of these currents to succeed in exerting such preponderant influence over all points of the society. It always reaches this degree of energy in the midst of restricted surroundings containing conditions specially favorable to its development. One or another social condition, occupation, or religious faith stimulates it more especially. This explains suicide's twofold character. When considered in its outer manifestations, it seems as though these were just a series of discon-

nected events; for it occurs at separated places without visible interrelations. Yet the sum of all these individual cases has its own unity and its own individuality, since the social suicide-rate is a distinctive trait of each collective personality. That is, though these particular environments where suicide occurs most frequently are separate from one another, dispersed in thousands of ways over the entire territory, they are nevertheless closely related; for they are parts of a single whole, organs of a single organism, as it were. The condition in which each is found therefore depends on the general condition of society. There is a close solidarity between the virulence achieved by one or another of its tendencies and the intensity of the tendency in the whole social body. Altruism is more or less a force in the army depending on its role among the civilian population, intellectual individualism is more developed and richer in suicides in Protestant environments the more pronounced it is in the rest of the nation, etc. Everything is tied together.

But though there is no individual state except insanity which may be considered a determining factor of suicide, it seems certain that no collective sentiment can affect individuals when they are absolutely indisposed to it. The above explanation might be thought inadequate for this reason, until we have shown how the currents giving rise to suicide find at the very moment and in the very environments in which they develop a sufficient number of persons accessible to their influence.

If we suppose, however, that this conjunction is really always necessary and that a collective tendency cannot impose itself by brute force on individuals with no preliminary predisposition, then this harmony must be automatically achieved; for the causes determining the social currents affect individuals simultaneously and predispose them to receive the collective influence. Between these two sorts of factors there is a natural affinity, from the very fact that they are dependent on, and expressive of the same cause: this makes them combine and become mutually adapted. The hypercivilization which breeds the anomic tendency and the egoistic tendency also refines nervous systems, making them excessively delicate; through this very fact they are less capable of firm attachment to a definite object, more impatient of any sort of discipline, more accessible both to violent irritation and to exaggerated depression. Inversely, the crude, rough culture implicit in the excessive altruism of primitive man develops a lack of sensitivity which favors renunciation. In short, just as society largely forms the individual, it forms him to the same extent in its own image. Society, therefore, cannot lack the material for its needs, for it has, so to speak, kneaded it with its own hands.

The role of individual factors in the origin of suicide can now be more precisely put. If, in a given moral environment, for example, in the same religious faith or in the same body of troops or in the same occupation, certain individuals are affected and certain others not, this is undoubtedly, in great part, because the formers' mental constitution, as elaborated by nature and events, offers less resistance to the suicidogenetic current. But though these conditions may share in determining the particular persons in whom this current becomes embodied, neither the special qualities nor the intensity of the current depend on these conditions. A given number of suicides is not found annually in a social group just because it contains a given number of neuropathic persons. Neuropathic conditions only cause the suicides to succumb with greater readiness to the current. Whence comes the great difference between the clinician's point of view and the sociologist's. The former confronts exclusively particular cases, isolated from one another. He establishes, very often, that the victim was either nervous or an alcoholic, and explains the act by one or the other of these psychopathic states. In a sense he is right; for if this person rather than his neighbors committed suicide, it is frequently for this reason. But in a general sense this motive does not cause people to kill themselves, *nor, especially cause a definite number to kill themselves in each society in a definite period of time*. The productive cause of the phenomenon naturally escapes the observer of individuals only; for it lies outside individuals. To discover it, one must raise his point of view above individual suicides and perceive what gives them unity. It will be objected that if enough neurasthenics did not exist, social causes would not produce all their effects. But no society exists in which the various forms of nervous degeneration do not provide suicide with more than the necessary number of candidates. Only certain ones are called, if this manner of speech is permitted. These are the ones who through circumstances have been nearer the pessimistic currents and who consequently have felt their influence more completely.

But a final question remains. Since each year has an equal number of suicides, the current does not strike simultaneously all those within its reach. The persons it will attack next year already exist; already, also, most of them are enmeshed in the collective life and therefore come under its influence. Why are they provisionally spared? It may indeed be understood why a year is needed to produce the current's full action; for since the conditions of social activity are not the same according to season, the current too changes in both intensity and direction at different times of the year. Only after the annual cycle is complete have all the combinations of circumstances



occurred, in terms of which it tends to vary. But since, by hypothesis, the next year only repeats the last and causes the same combinations, why was not the first enough? Why, to use the familiar expression, does society pay its bill only in installments?

What we think explains this delay is the way time affects the suicidal tendency. It is an auxiliary but important factor in it. Indeed, we know that the tendency grows incessantly from youth to maturity, and that it is often ten times as great at the close of life as at its beginning. The collective force impelling men to kill themselves therefore only gradually penetrates them. All things being equal, they become more accessible to it as they become older, probably because repeated experiences are needed to reveal the complete emptiness of an egoistic life or the total vanity of limitless ambition. Thus, victims of suicide complete their destiny only in successive layers of generations.

## JOHN DEWEY

DEWEY devoted a large part of his philosophic career to the exposition of a theory of productive inquiry. He recognized human thought as the means by which man both adjusts to his environment and adjusts his environment to himself. From its earliest stages, then, thought was valued by men not so much for its own sake, as pure delight, but for its utility in resolving problems of day-to-day living. The being and value of thought consist in the process of inquiry. Dewey admired greatly the problem-solving techniques of laboratory scientists, as he understood them, and conceived that the extension to all human activities of similar methods of inquiry would yield magnificent and fruitful results. Although he was himself a skillful dialectician, he decried the value of dialectic as it had traditionally been practiced by philosophers. The "reconstruction" in philosophy that he envisaged demanded that traditional philosophic methods of debate, concentrated on the "problems of philosophers," be replaced by instrumental methods of inquiry, dedicated to the exploration of the "problems of men."

Furthermore, since Dewey regarded thought as a form of behavior, and behavior as reconstructive of the environment, thought (problem-solving) was a vital link in the chain of interactivity of man, society, and nature. Interactivity is a dynamic process; to accept, even for the purposes of discussion, a static conception of man, society, or nature is to vitiate our thought. Thus from another angle Dewey made war on fixed, standardized concepts in traditional philosophy. The sharp antitheses of man and society, of nature and nurture, of freedom and control, seemed to him not merely valueless but actually harmful to social inquiry, because an unsatisfactory status quo could shelter itself from change behind these generalized statements of eternal and inevitable antagonism. Social thought can be reconstructed, and thus become reconstructive if the fixed concept of the individual versus society can be replaced by a view of man in creative interaction with his social environment.

The following selection has been taken from *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (1920).



### RECONSTRUCTION IN PHILOSOPHY

#### CHAPTER VIII: RECONSTRUCTION AS AFFECTING SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY

How can philosophic change seriously affect social philosophy? As far as fundamentals are concerned, every view and combination appears to have

---

This selection has been reprinted from John Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (pp. 187-213, Copyright, 1948 by The Beacon Press, Boston) by permission of the publisher.

been formulated already. Society is composed of individuals: this obvious and basic fact no philosophy, whatever its pretensions to novelty, can question or alter. Hence these three alternatives: Society must exist for the sake of individuals; or individuals must have their ends and ways of living set for them by society; or else society and individuals are correlative, organic, to one another, society requiring the service and subordination of individuals and at the same time existing to serve them. Beyond these three views, none seems to be logically conceivable. Moreover, while each of the three types includes many subspecies and variations within itself, yet the changes seem to have been so thoroughly rung that at most only minor variations are now possible.

Especially would it seem true that the "organic" conception meets all the objections to the extreme individualistic and extreme socialistic theories, avoiding the errors alike of Plato and Bentham. Just because society is composed of individuals, it would seem that individuals and the associative relations that hold them together must be of coequal importance. Without strong and competent individuals, the bonds and ties that form society have nothing to lay hold on. Apart from associations with one another, individuals are isolated from one another and fade and wither; or are opposed to one another and their conflicts injure individual development. Law, state, church, family friendship, industrial association, these and other institutions and arrangements are necessary in order that individuals may grow and find their specific capacities and functions. Without their aid and support human life is, as Hobbes said, brutish, solitary, nasty.

We plunge into the heart of the matter, by asserting that these various theories suffer from a common defect. They are all committed to the logic of general notions under which specific situations are to be brought. What we want light upon is this or that group of individuals, this or that concrete human being, this or that special institution or social arrangement. For such a logic of inquiry, the traditionally accepted logic substitutes discussion of the meaning of concepts and their dialectical relationship to one another. The discussion goes on in terms of *the* state, *the* individual; the nature of institutions as such, society in general.

We need guidance in dealing with particular perplexities in domestic life, and are met by dissertations on the Family or by assertions of the sacredness of individual Personality. We want to know about the worth of the institution of private property as it operates under given conditions of definite time and place. We meet with the reply of Proudhon that property generally is theft, or with that of Hegel that the realization of will is the end of

all institutions, and that private ownership as the expression of mastery of personality over physical nature is a necessary element in such realization. Both answers may have a certain suggestiveness in connection with specific situations. But the conceptions are not proffered for what they may be worth in connection with special historic phenomena. They are general answers supposed to have a universal meaning that covers and dominates all particulars. Hence they do not assist inquiry. They close it. They are not instrumentalities to be employed and tested in clarifying concrete social difficulties. They are ready-made principles to be imposed upon particulars in order to determine their nature. They tell us about *the* state when we want to know about *some* state. But the implication is that what is said about *the* state applies to any state that we happen to wish to know about.

In transferring the issue from concrete situations to definitions and conceptual deductions, the effect, especially of the organic theory, is to supply the apparatus for intellectual justification of the established order. Those most interested in practical social progress and the emancipation of groups from oppression have turned a cold shoulder to the organic theory. The effect, if not the intention, of German idealism as applied in social philosophy was to provide a bulwark for the maintenance of the political *status quo* against the tide of radical ideas coming from revolutionary France. Although Hegel asserted in explicit form that the end of states and institutions is to further the realization of the freedom of all, his effect was to consecrate the Prussian State and to enshrine bureaucratic absolutism. Was this apologetic tendency accidental, or did it spring from something in the logic of the notions that were employed?

Surely the latter. If we talk about *the* state and *the* individual, rather than about this or that political organization and this or that group of needy and suffering human beings, the tendency is to throw the glamour and prestige, the meaning and value attached to the general notion, over the concrete situation and thereby to cover up the defects of the latter and disguise the need of serious reforms. The meanings which are found in the general notions are injected into the particulars that come under them. Quite properly so if we once grant the logic of rigid universals under which the concrete cases have to be subsumed in order to be understood and explained.

Again, the tendency of the organic point of view is to minimize the significance of specific conflicts. Since the individual and the state or social institution are but two sides of the same reality, since they are already reconciled in principle and conception, the conflict in any particular case can be but apparent. Since in theory the individual and the state are reciprocally



necessary and helpful to one another, why pay much attention to the fact that in *this* state a whole group of individuals are suffering from oppressive conditions? In "reality" their interests cannot be in conflict with those of the state to which they belong; the opposition is only superficial and casual. Capital and labor cannot "really" conflict because each is an organic necessity to the other, and both to the organized community as a whole. There cannot "really" be any sex-problem because men and women are indispensable both to one another and to the state. In his day, Aristotle could easily employ the logic of general concepts superior to individuals to show that the institution of slavery was in the interests both of the state and of the slave class. Even if the intention is not to justify the existing order the effect is to divert attention from special situations. Rationalistic logic formerly made men careless in observation of the concrete in physical philosophy. It now operates to depress and retard observation in specific social phenomena. The social philosopher, dwelling in the region of his concepts, "solves" problems by showing the relationship of ideas, instead of helping men solve problems in the concrete by supplying them hypotheses to be used and tested in projects of reform.

Meanwhile, of course, the concrete troubles and evils remain. They are not magically waived out of existence because in theory society is organic. The region of concrete difficulties, where the assistance of intelligent method for tentative plans for experimentation is urgently needed, is precisely where intelligence fails to operate. In this region of the specific and concrete, men are thrown back upon the crudest empiricism, upon short-sighted opportunism and the matching of brute forces. In theory, the particulars are all neatly disposed of; they come under and go into an orderly pigeon-hole in a systematic filing cabinet, labelled political science or sociology. But in empirical fact they remain as perplexing, confused and unorganized as they were before. So they are dealt with not by even an endeavor at scientific method but by blind rule of thumb, citation of precedents, considerations of immediate advantage, smoothing things over, use of coercive force and the clash of personal ambitions. The world still survives; it has therefore got on somehow:—so much cannot be denied. The method of trial and error and competition of selfishness has somehow wrought out many improvements. But social theory nevertheless exists as an idle luxury rather than as a guiding method of inquiry and planning. In the question of methods concerned with reconstruction of special situations rather than in any refinements in the general concepts of institution, individuality, state, freedom, law, order, progress, etc., lies the true impact of philosophical reconstruction.

Consider the conception of the individual self. The individualistic school of England and France in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was empirical in intent. It based its individualism, philosophically speaking, upon the belief that individuals are alone real, that classes and organizations are secondary and derived. They are artificial, while individuals are natural. In what way then can individualism be said to come under the animadversions that have been passed? To say the defect was that this school overlooked those connections with other persons which are a part of the constitution of every individual is true as far as it goes; but unfortunately it rarely goes beyond the point of just that wholesale justification of institutions which has been criticized.

The real difficulty is that the individual is regarded as something *given*, something already there. Consequently, he can only be something to be catered to, something whose pleasures are to be magnified and possessions multiplied. When the individual is taken as something given already, anything that can be done to him or for him can only be by way of external impressions and belongings: sensations of pleasure and pain, comforts, securities. Now it is true that social arrangements, laws, institutions are made for man, rather than man is made for them; that they are means and agencies of human welfare and progress. But they are not means for obtaining something for individuals, not even happiness. They are means of *creating* individuals. Only in the physical sense of physical bodies that to the senses are separate is individuality an original datum. Individuality in a social and moral sense is something to be wrought out. It means initiative, inventiveness, varied resourcefulness, assumption of responsibility in choice of belief and conduct. These are not gifts, but achievements. As achievements, they are not absolute but relative to the use that is to be made of them. And this use varies with the environment.

The import of this conception comes out in considering the fortunes of the idea of self-interest. All members of the empirical school emphasized this idea. It was the sole motive of mankind. Virtue was to be attained by making benevolent action profitable to the individual; social arrangements were to be reformed so that egoism and altruistic consideration of others would be identified. Moralists of the opposite school were not backward in pointing out the evils of any theory that reduced both morals and political science to means of calculating self-interest. Consequently they threw the whole idea of interest overboard as obnoxious to morals. The effect of this reaction was to strengthen the cause of authority and political obscurantism. When the play of interest is eliminated, what remains? What concrete mov-

ing forces can be found? Those who identified the self with something ready-made and its interest with acquisition of pleasure and profit took the most effective means possible to reinstate the logic of abstract conceptions of law, justice, sovereignty, freedom, etc.—all of those vague general ideas that for all their seeming rigidity can be manipulated by any clever politician to cover up his designs and to make the worse seem the better cause. Interests are specific and dynamic; they are the natural terms of any concrete social thinking. But they are damned beyond recovery when they are identified with the things of a petty selfishness. They can be employed as vital terms only when the self is seen to be in process, and interest to be a name for whatever is concerned in furthering its movement.

The same logic applies to the old dispute of whether reform should start with the individual or with institutions. When the self is regarded as something complete within itself, then it is readily argued that only internal moralistic changes are of importance in general reform. Institutional changes are said to be merely external. They may add conveniences and comforts to life, but they cannot effect moral improvements. The result is to throw the burden for social improvement upon free-will in its most impossible form. Moreover, social and economic passivity are encouraged. Individuals are led to concentrate in moral introspection upon their own vices and virtues, and to neglect the character of the environment. Morals withdraw from active concern with detailed economic and political conditions. Let us perfect ourselves within, and in due season changes in society will come of themselves is the teaching. And while saints are engaged in introspection, burly sinners run the world. But when self-hood is perceived to be an active process it is also seen that social modifications are the only means of the creation of changed personalities. Institutions are viewed in their educative effect:—with reference to the types of individuals they foster. The interest in individual moral improvement and the social interest in objective reform of economic and political conditions are identified. And inquiry into the meaning of social arrangements gets definite point and direction. We are led to ask what the specific stimulating, fostering and nurturing power of each specific social arrangement may be. The old-time separation between politics and morals is abolished at its roots.

Consequently we cannot be satisfied with the general statement that society and the state is organic to the individual. The question is one of specific causations. Just what response does *this* social arrangement, political or economic, evoke, and what effect does it have upon the disposition of those who engage in it? Does it release capacity? If so, how widely? Among a

few, with a corresponding depression in others, or in an extensive and equitable way? Is the capacity which is set free also directed in some coherent way, so that it becomes a power, or its manifestation spasmodic and capricious? Since responses are of an indefinite diversity of kind, these inquiries have to be detailed and specific. Are men's senses rendered more delicately sensitive and appreciative, or are they blunted and dulled by this and that form of social organization? Are their minds trained so that the hands are more deft and cunning? Is curiosity awakened or blunted? What is its quality: is it merely esthetic, dwelling on the forms and surfaces of things or is it also an intellectual searching into their meaning? Such questions as these (as well as the more obvious ones about the qualities conventionally labelled moral), become the starting-points of inquiries about every institution of the community when it is recognized that individuality is not originally given but is created under the influences of associated life. Like utilitarianism, the theory subjects every form of organization to continual scrutiny and criticism. But instead of leading us to ask what it does in the way of causing pains and pleasures to individuals already in existence, it inquires what is done to release specific capacities and co-ordinate them into working powers. What sort of individuals are created?

The waste of mental energy due to conducting discussion of social affairs in terms of conceptual generalities is astonishing. How far would the biologist and the physician progress if when the subject of respiration is under consideration, discussion confined itself to bandying back and forth the concepts of organ and organism:—If for example one school thought respiration could be known and understood by insisting upon the fact that it occurs in an individual body and therefore is an "individual" phenomenon, while an opposite school insisted that it is simply one function in organic interaction with others and can be known or understood therefore only by reference to other functions taken in an equally general or wholesale way? Each proposition is equally true and equally futile. What is needed is specific inquiries into a multitude of specific structures and interactions. Not only does the solemn reiteration of categories of individual and organic or social wholes not further these definite and detailed inquiries, but it checks them. It detains thought within pompous and sonorous generalities wherein controversy is as inevitable as it is incapable of solution. It is true enough that if cells were not in vital interaction with one another, they could neither conflict nor co-operate. But the fact of the existence of an "organic" social group, instead of answering any questions merely marks the fact that questions exist: Just what conflicts and what co-operations occur, and what are their



specific causes and consequences? But because of the persistence within social philosophy of the order of ideas that has been expelled from natural philosophy, even sociologists take conflict or co-operation as general categories upon which to base their science, and condescend to empirical facts only for illustrations. As a rule, their chief "problem" is a purely dialectical one, covered up by a thick quilt of empirical anthropological and historical citations: How do individuals unite to form society? How are individuals socially controlled? And the problem is justly called dialectical because it springs from antecedent conceptions of "individual" and "social."

Just as "individual" is not one thing, but is a blanket term for the immense variety of specific reactions, habits, dispositions and powers of human nature that are evoked, and confirmed under the influences of associated life, so with the term "social." Society is one word, but infinitely many things. It covers all the ways in which by associating together men share their experiences, and build up common interests and aims; street gangs, schools for burglary, clans, social cliques, trades unions, joint stock corporations, villages and international alliances. The new method takes effect in substituting inquiry into these specific, changing and relative facts (relative to problems and purposes, not metaphysically relative) for solemn manipulation of general notions.

Strangely enough, the current conception of the state is a case in point. For one direct influence of the classic order of fixed species arranged in hierarchical order is the attempt of German political philosophy in the nineteenth century to enumerate a definite number of institutions, each having its own essential and immutable meaning; to arrange them in an order of "evolution" which corresponds with the dignity and rank of the respective meanings. The National State was placed at the top as the consummation and culmination, and also the basis of all other institutions. . . .

There can be no doubt of the tremendously important rôle played by the modern territorial national state. . . . The struggle for the supremacy of the State over other forms of organization was directed against the power of minor districts, provinces, principalities, against the dispersion of power among feudal lords as well as, in some countries, against the pretensions of an ecclesiastic potentate. The "State" represents the conspicuous culmination of the great movement of social integration and consolidation taking place in the last few centuries, tremendously accelerated by the concentrating and combining forces of steam and electricity. Naturally, inevitably, the students of political science have been preoccupied with this great historic phenomenon, and their intellectual activities have been directed to its systematic

formulation. Because the contemporary progressive movement was to establish the unified state against the inertia of minor social units and against the ambitions of rivals for power, political theory developed the dogma of the sovereignty of the national state, internally and externally.

As the work of integration and consolidation reaches its climax, the question arises, however, whether the national state, once it is firmly established and no longer struggling against strong foes, is not just an instrumentality for promoting and protecting other and more voluntary forms of association, rather than a supreme end in itself. Two actual phenomena may be pointed to in support of an affirmative answer. Along with the development of the larger, more inclusive and more unified organization of the state has gone the emancipation of individuals from restrictions and servitudes previously imposed by custom and class status. But the individuals freed from external and coercive bonds have not remained isolated. Social molecules have at once recombined in new associations and organizations. Compulsory associations have been replaced by voluntary ones; rigid organizations by those more amenable to human choice and purposes—more directly changeable at will. What upon one side looks like a movement toward individualism, turns out to be really a movement toward multiplying all kinds and varieties of associations: Political parties, industrial corporations, scientific and artistic organizations, trade unions, churches, schools, clubs and societies without number, for the cultivation of every conceivable interest that men have in common. As they develop in number and importance, the state tends to become more and more a regulator and adjuster among them; defining the limits of their actions, preventing and settling conflicts. . . .

Society, as was said, is many associations not a single organization. Society means association; coming together in joint intercourse and action for the better realization of any form of experience which is augmented and confirmed by being shared. Hence there are as many associations as there are goods which are enhanced by being mutually communicated and participated in. And these are literally indefinite in number. Indeed, capacity to endure publicity and communication is the test by which it is decided whether a pretended good is genuine or spurious. Moralists have always insisted upon the fact that good is universal, not just private, particular. But too often, like Plato, they have been content with a metaphysical universality or, like Kant, with a logical universality. Communication, sharing, joint participation are the only actual ways of universalizing the moral law and end. We [have] insisted . . . upon the unique character of every intrinsic good. But the counterpart of this proposition is that the situation in which a

good is consciously realized is not one of transient sensations or private appetites but one of sharing and communication—public, social. Even the hermit communes with gods or spirits; even misery loves company; and the most extreme selfishness includes a band of followers or some partner to share in the attained good. Universalization means socialization, the extension of the area and range of those who share in a good.

The increasing acknowledgment that goods exist and endure only through being communicated and that association is the means of conjoint sharing lies back of the modern sense of humanity and democracy. It is the saving salt in altruism and philanthropy, which without this factor degenerate into moral condescension and moral interference, taking the form of trying to regulate the affairs of others under the guise of doing them good or of conferring upon them some right as if it were a gift of charity. It follows that organization is never an end in itself. It is a means of promoting *association*, of multiplying effective points of contact between persons, directing their intercourse into the modes of greatest fruitfulness.

The tendency to treat organization as an end in itself is responsible for all the exaggerated theories in which individuals are subordinated to some institution to which is given the noble name of society. Society is the process of associating in such ways that experiences, ideas, emotions, values are transmitted and made common. To this active process, both the individual and the institutionally organized may truly be said to be subordinate. The individual is subordinate because except in and through communication of experience from and to others, he remains dumb, merely sentient, a brute animal. Only in association with fellows does he become a conscious centre of experience. Organization, which is what traditional theory has generally meant by the term Society or State, is also subordinate because it becomes static, rigid, institutionalized whenever it is not employed to facilitate and enrich the contacts of human beings with one another.

The long-time controversy between rights and duties, law and freedom is another version of the strife between the Individual and Society as fixed concepts. Freedom for an individual means growth, ready change when modification is required.

It signifies an active process, that of release of capacity from whatever hems it in. But since society can develop only as new resources are put at its disposal, it is absurd to suppose that freedom has positive significance for individuality but negative meaning for social interests. Society is strong, forceful, stable against accident only when all its members can function to the limit of their capacity. Such functioning cannot be achieved without

allowing a leeway of experimentation beyond the limits of established and sanctioned custom. A certain amount of overt confusion and irregularity is likely to accompany the granting of the margin of liberty without which capacity cannot find itself. But socially as well as scientifically the great thing is not to avoid mistakes but to have them take place under conditions such that they can be utilized to increase intelligence in the future.

If British liberal social philosophy tended, true to the spirit of its atomistic empiricism, to make freedom and the exercise of rights ends in themselves, the remedy is not to be found in recourse to a philosophy of fixed obligations and authoritative law such as characterized German political thinking. The latter, as events have demonstrated, is dangerous because of its implicit menace to the free self-determination of other social groups. But it is also weak internally when put to the final test. In its hostility to the free experimentation and power of choice of the individual in determining social affairs, it limits the capacity of many or most individuals to share effectively in social operations, and thereby deprives society of the full contribution of all its members. The best guarantee of collective efficiency and power is liberation and use of the diversity of individual capacities in initiative, planning, foresight, vigor and endurance. Personality must be educated, and personality cannot be educated by confining its operations to technical and specialized things, or to the less important relationships of life. Full education comes only when there is a responsible share on the part of each person, in proportion to capacity, in shaping the aims and policies of the social groups to which he belongs. This fact fixes the significance of democracy. It cannot be conceived as a sectarian or racial thing nor as a consecration of some form of government which has already attained constitutional sanction. It is but a name for the fact that human nature is developed only when its elements take part in directing things which are common, things for the sake of which men and women form groups—families, industrial companies, governments, churches, scientific associations and so on. The principle holds as much of one form of association, say in industry and commerce, as it does in government. The identification of democracy with political democracy which is responsible for most of its failures is, however, based upon the traditional ideas which make the individual and the state ready-made entities in themselves.

As the new ideas find adequate expression in social life, they will be absorbed into a moral background, and the ideas and beliefs themselves will be deepened and be unconsciously transmitted and sustained. They will color the imagination and temper the desires and affections. They will not



form a set of ideas to be expounded, reasoned out and argumentatively supported, but will be a spontaneous way of envisaging life. Then they will take on religious value. The religious spirit will be revived because it will be in harmony with men's unquestioned scientific beliefs and their ordinary day-by-day social activities. It will not be obliged to lead a timid, half-concealed and half-apologetic life because tied to scientific ideas and social creeds that are continuously eaten into and broken down. But especially will the ideas and beliefs themselves be deepened and intensified because spontaneously fed by emotion and translated into imaginative vision and fine art, while they are now maintained by more or less conscious effort, by deliberate reflection, by taking thought. They are technical and abstract just because they are not as yet carried as a matter of course by imagination and feelings.

. . . European philosophy arose when intellectual methods and scientific results moved away from social traditions which had consolidated and embodied the fruits of spontaneous desire and fancy. . . . [Philosophy has] ever since had the problem of adjusting the dry, thin and meagre scientific standpoint with the obstinately persisting body of warm and abounding imaginative beliefs. Conceptions of possibility, progress, free movement and infinitely diversified opportunity have been suggested by modern science. But until they have displaced from *imagination* the heritage of the immutable and the once-for-all ordered and systematized, the ideas of mechanism and matter will lie like a dead weight upon the emotions, paralyzing religion and distorting art. When the liberation of capacity no longer seems a menace to organization and established institutions, something that cannot be avoided practically and yet something that is a threat to conservation of the most precious values of the past, when the liberating of human capacity operates as a socially creative force, art will not be a luxury, a stranger to the daily occupations of making a living. Making a living economically speaking, will be at one with making a life that is worth living. And when the emotional force, the mystic force one might say, of communication, of the miracle of shared life and shared experience is spontaneously felt, the hardness and crudeness of contemporary life will be bathed in the light that never was on land and sea.

Poetry, art, religion are precious things. They cannot be maintained by lingering in the past and futilely wishing to restore what the movement of events in science, industry and politics has destroyed. They are an out-flowering of thought and desires that unconsciously converge into a disposition of imagination as a result of thousands and thousands of daily episodes

and contact. They cannot be willed into existence or coerced into being. The wind of the spirit bloweth where it listeth and the kingdom of God in such things does not come with observation. But while it is impossible to retain and recover by deliberate volition old sources of religion and art that have been discredited, it is possible to expedite the development of the vital sources of a religion and art that are yet to be. Not indeed by action directly aimed at their production, but by substituting faith in the active tendencies of the day for dread and dislike of them, and by the courage of intelligence to follow whither social and scientific changes direct us. We are weak today in ideal matters because intelligence is divorced from aspiration. The bare force of circumstances compels us onwards in the daily detail of our beliefs and acts, but our deeper thoughts and desires turn backwards. When philosophy shall have co-operated with the course of events and made clear and coherent the meaning of the daily detail, science and emotion will interpenetrate, practice and imagination will embrace. Poetry and religious feeling will be the unforced flowers of life. To further this articulation and revelation of the meanings of the current course of events, is the task and problem of philosophy in days of transition.

## ERICH FROMM

**P**SYCHOANALYST, social psychologist, and student of ethics, Erich Fromm has been a leading figure among Neo-Freudian psychiatrists. Fromm was born in Germany in 1900, educated in philosophy and sociology at Heidelberg, and trained as a psychoanalyst at the Berlin Institute. In 1933, he emigrated to the United States to found, with Harry Stack Sullivan, the Washington School of Psychiatry and, later, the William Alanson White Institute of Psychiatry.

Fromm has sought to make explicit the basic tenets of Freudian psychology, to exhibit their deficiencies and limitations, and to adapt them to a novel conception of individual and social therapy. He does not accept Freud's contention that man's unconscious, irrational impulses must be domesticated by his adjusting himself to the restrictions of social environment. For he is convinced that man is by nature social and that he is endowed with the capacity to live creatively, lovingly, and wholly rationally.

Analysis of the writings of Max Weber (1864-1920) and Karl Marx (1818-1883) and the teachings of John Calvin (1509-1564) and Martin Luther (1483-1546) had persuaded Fromm that modern man, though freed from bondage to a "collectivist" medieval society, has lost his earlier security, has failed to acquire power to direct his own destiny, and has become isolated from his fellows. Man seeks to compensate for his unbearable loneliness by withdrawing into a world of private fantasy, by passively submitting to authorities, or by brutally wielding power over helpless individuals in an effort to achieve the love and peace he craves. The neurotic mechanisms described by Freud are interpreted as ineffectual techniques of escaping from a world made harsh by irrational social forces which thwart man's rational strivings. It is in this way that what Fromm calls a "socially patterned defect of character" develops. For he urges that therapy ought to be concerned not with the adjustment of an inherently irrational individual to society, but with an acclimatization of the rational individual to his own powers.

Fromm's experience as a psychoanalyst as well as his study of Benedict Spinoza (1632-1677), Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), and the Talmudic scholars suggests to him that man has two kinds of conscience: that which derives from a will foreign to his, disobedience to which causes him to feel guilt; and that which stems from within him. The latter is his "humanistic conscience"; and it prescribes only those moral responsibilities which are in conformity with man's own nature. Man will perish unless he heeds the voice of that conscience; for only it may make moral claims upon him. Consequently, there are two moral imperatives which Fromm urges upon mankind. First: So act in your private and interpersonal dealings as to fulfill your own needs as a rational human being. Second: So act as to create the social conditions wherein alone man may continue to flourish free from insecurity and free to pursue his distinctively human goals.

Man has the moral power to recapture those of his capacities which have become alienated from him. His faith in himself, and his ability to overcome his impotence,

are dependent upon his awareness of his own neurotic drives, the source of his guilt and anxiety. In consequence, neuroses may be resolved not by medical therapy alone, but through further understanding of ethical principles and their relation to moral conduct. The latter, however, must always occur by use of the psychological techniques initiated by Freud. The individual, in the final analysis, serves as his own guide and teacher.

Two of Fromm's most influential works have been *Escape from Freedom* (1941), from which the following selection has been taken, and *Man for Himself* (1947).



## ESCAPE FROM FREEDOM

### CHAPTER I: FREEDOM—A PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEM?

Modern European and American history is centered around the effort to gain freedom from the political, economic, and spiritual shackles that have bound men. The battles for freedom were fought by the oppressed, those who wanted new liberties, against those who had privileges to defend. While a class was fighting for its own liberation from domination, it believed itself to be fighting for human freedom as such and thus was able to appeal to an ideal, to the longing for freedom rooted in all who are oppressed. In the long and virtually continuous battle for freedom, however, classes that were fighting against oppression at one stage sided with the enemies of freedom when victory was won and new privileges were to be defended.

Despite many reverses, freedom has won battles. Many died in those battles in the conviction that to die in the struggle against oppression was better than to live without freedom. Such a death was the utmost assertion of their individuality. History seemed to be proving that it was possible for man to govern himself, to make decisions for himself, and to think and feel as he saw fit. The full expression of man's potentialities seemed to be the goal toward which social development was rapidly approaching. The principles of economic liberalism, political democracy, religious autonomy, and individualism in personal life, gave expression to the longing for freedom, and at the same time seemed to bring mankind nearer to its realization. One tie after another was severed. Man had overthrown the domination of nature and made himself her master; he had overthrown the domination of the Church and the domination of the absolutist state. The *abolition of ex-*

---

This selection is from *Escape from Freedom*, Copyright, 1941, by Erich Fromm, and reprinted by permission of Rinehart and Company, Inc., publishers, pp. 3-22, 24-37.



*ternal domination* seemed to be not only a necessary but also a sufficient condition to attain the cherished goal: freedom of the individual.

The World War was regarded by many as the final struggle and its conclusion the ultimate victory for freedom. Existing democracies appeared strengthened, and new ones replaced old monarchies. But only a few years elapsed before new systems emerged which denied everything that men believed they had won in centuries of struggle. For the essence of these new systems, which effectively took command of man's entire social and personal life, was the submission of all but a handful of men to an authority over which they had no control.

At first many found comfort in the thought that the victory of the authoritarian system was due to the madness of a few individuals and that their madness would lead to their downfall in due time. Others smugly believed that the Italian people, or the Germans, were lacking in a sufficiently long period of training in democracy, and that therefore one could wait complacently until they had reached the political maturity of the Western democracies. Another common illusion, perhaps the most dangerous of all, was that men like Hitler had gained power over the vast apparatus of the state through nothing but cunning and trickery, that they and their satellites ruled merely by sheer force; that the whole population was only the will-less object of betrayal and terror.

In the years that have elapsed since, the fallacy of these arguments has become apparent. We have been compelled to recognize that millions in Germany were as eager to surrender their freedom as their fathers were to fight for it; that instead of wanting freedom, they sought for ways of escape from it; that other millions were indifferent and did not believe the defense of freedom to be worth fighting and dying for. We also recognize that the crisis of democracy is not a peculiarly Italian or German problem, but one confronting every modern state. Nor does it matter which symbols the enemies of human freedom choose: freedom is not less endangered if attacked in the name of anti-Fascism or in that of outright Fascism.<sup>1</sup> This truth has been so forcefully formulated by John Dewey that I express the thought in his words: "The serious threat to our democracy," he says, "is not the existence of foreign totalitarian states. It is the existence within our own personal attitudes and within our own institutions of conditions which have given a victory to external authority, discipline, uniformity and de-

<sup>1</sup> I use the term Fascism or authoritarianism to denote a dictatorial system of the type of the German or Italian one. If I mean the German system in particular, I shall call it Nazism.

pendence upon The Leader in foreign countries. The battlefield is also accordingly here—within ourselves and our institutions.” . . .

In addition to the problem of the economic and social conditions which have given rise to Fascism, there is a human problem which needs to be understood. It is . . . [our] purpose . . . to analyze those dynamic factors in the character structure of modern man, which made him want to give up freedom in Fascist countries and which so widely prevail in millions of our own people.

These are the outstanding questions that arise when we look at the human aspect of freedom, the longing for submission, and the lust for power: What is freedom as a human experience? Is the desire for freedom something inherent in human nature? Is it an identical experience regardless of what kind of culture a person lives in, or is it something different according to the degree of individualism reached in a particular society? Is freedom only the absence of external pressure or is it also the *presence* of something—and if so, of what? What are the social and economic factors in society that make for the striving for freedom? Can freedom become a burden, too heavy for man to bear, something he tries to escape from? Why then is it that freedom is for many a cherished goal and for others a threat?

Is there not also, perhaps, besides an innate desire for freedom, an instinctive wish for submission? If there is not, how can we account for the attraction which submission to a leader has for so many today? Is submission always to an overt authority, or is there also submission to internalized authorities, such as duty or conscience, to inner compulsions or to anonymous authorities like public opinion? Is there a hidden satisfaction in submitting, and what is its essence?

What is it that creates in men an insatiable lust for power? Is it the strength of their vital energy—or is it a fundamental weakness and inability to experience life spontaneously and lovingly? What are the psychological conditions that make for the strength of these strivings? What are the social conditions upon which such psychological conditions in turn are based?

Analysis of the human aspect of freedom and of authoritarianism forces us to consider a general problem, namely, that of the rôle which psychological factors play as active forces in the social process; and this eventually leads to the problem of the interaction of psychological, economic, and ideological factors in the social process. Any attempt to understand the attraction which Fascism exercises upon great nations compels us to recognize the rôle of psychological factors. For we are dealing here with a political

system which, essentially, does not appeal to rational forces of self-interest, but which arouses and mobilizes diabolical forces in man which we had believed to be nonexistent, or at least to have died out long ago. The familiar picture of man in the last centuries was one of a rational being whose actions were determined by his self-interest and the ability to act according to it. Even writers like Hobbes, who recognized lust for power and hostility as driving forces in man, explained the existence of these forces as a logical result of self-interest: since men are equal and thus have the same wish for happiness, and since there is not enough wealth to satisfy them all to the same extent, they necessarily fight against each other and want power to secure the future enjoyment of what they have at present. But Hobbes's picture became outmoded. The more the middle class succeeded in breaking down the power of the former political or religious rulers, the more men succeeded in mastering nature, and the more millions of individuals became economically independent, the more did one come to believe in a rational world and in man as an essentially rational being. The dark and diabolical forces of man's nature were relegated to the Middle Ages and to still earlier periods of history, and they were explained by lack of knowledge or by the cunning schemes of deceitful kings and priests. . . .

When Fascism came into power, most people were unprepared, both theoretically and practically. They were unable to believe that man could exhibit such propensities for evil, such lust for power, such disregard for the rights of the weak, or such yearning for submission. Only a few had been aware of the rumbling of the volcano preceding the outbreak. Nietzsche had disturbed the complacent optimism of the nineteenth century; so had Marx in a different way. Another warning had come somewhat later from Freud . . . [who] led us to the top of the volcano and made us look into the boiling crater.

Freud went further than anybody before him in directing attention to the observation and analysis of the irrational and unconscious forces which determine parts of human behavior. He and his followers in modern psychology not only uncovered the irrational and unconscious sector of man's nature, the existence of which had been neglected by modern rationalism; he also showed that these irrational phenomena followed certain laws and therefore could be understood rationally. He taught us to understand the language of dreams and somatic symptoms as well as the irrationalities in human behavior. He discovered that these irrationalities as well as the whole character structure of an individual were reactions to the influences exer-

cised by the outside world and particularly by those occurring in early childhood.

But Freud was so imbued with the spirit of his culture that he could not go beyond certain limits which were set by it. These very limits became limitations for his understanding even of the sick individual; they handicapped his understanding of the normal individual and of the irrational phenomena operating in social life.

Since . . . this analysis is based on some of the fundamental discoveries of Freud—particularly those concerning the operation of unconscious forces in man's character and their dependence on external influences—I think it will be helpful to the reader to know . . . some of the general principles of our approach, and also the main differences between this approach and the classical Freudian concepts.

Freud accepted the traditional belief in a basic dichotomy between man and society, as well as the traditional doctrine of the evilness of human nature. Man, to him, is fundamentally antisocial. Society must domesticate him, must allow some direct satisfaction of biological—and hence, ineradicable—drives; but for the most part society must refine and adroitly check man's basic impulses. In consequence of this suppression of natural impulses by society something miraculous happens: the suppressed drives turn into strivings that are culturally valuable and thus become the human basis for culture. Freud chose the word sublimation for this strange transformation from suppression into civilized behavior. If the amount of suppression is greater than the capacity for sublimation, individuals become neurotic and it is necessary to allow the lessening of suppression. Generally, however, there is a reverse relation between satisfaction of man's drives and culture: the more suppression, the more culture (and the more danger of neurotic disturbances). The relation of the individual to society in Freud's theory is essentially a static one: the individual remains virtually the same and becomes changed only in so far as society exercises greater pressure on his natural drives (and thus enforces more sublimation) or allows more satisfaction (and thus sacrifices culture).

Like the so-called basic instincts of man which earlier psychologists accepted, Freud's conception of human nature was essentially a reflection of the most important drives to be seen in modern man. For Freud, the individual of his culture represented "man," and those passions and anxieties that are characteristic for man in modern society were looked upon as eternal forces rooted in the biological constitution of man.



While we could give many illustrations of this point (as, for instance, the social basis for the hostility prevalent today in modern man, the Oedipus complex, the so-called castration complex in women), I want only to give one more illustration which is particularly important because it concerns the whole concept of man as a social being. Freud always considers the individual in his relation to others. These relations as Freud sees them, however, are similar to the economic relations to others which are characteristic of the individual in capitalist society. Each person works for himself, individualistically, at his own risk, and not primarily in co-operation with others. But he is not a Robinson Crusoe; he needs others, as customers, as employees, or as employers. He must buy and sell, give and take. The market, whether it is the commodity or the labor market, regulates these relations. Thus the individual, primarily alone and self-sufficient, enters into economic relations with others as means to one end: to sell and to buy. Freud's concept of human relations is essentially the same: the individual appears fully equipped with biologically given drives, which need to be satisfied. In order to satisfy them, the individual enters into relations with other "objects." Other individuals thus are always a means to one's end, the satisfaction of strivings which in themselves originate in the individual before he enters into contact with others. The field of human relations in Freud's sense is similar to the market—it is an exchange of satisfaction of biologically given needs, in which the relationship to the other individual is always a means to an end but never an end in itself.

Contrary to Freud's viewpoint, the analysis offered . . . [here] is based on the assumption that the key problem of psychology is that of the specific kind of relatedness of the individual towards the world and not that of the satisfaction or frustration of this or that instinctual need *per se*; furthermore, on the assumption that the relationship between man and society is not a static one. It is not as if we had on the one hand an individual equipped by nature with certain drives and on the other, society as something apart from him, either satisfying or frustrating these innate propensities. Although there are certain needs, such as hunger, thirst, sex, which are common to man, those drives which make for the *differences* in men's characters, like love and hatred, the lust for power and the yearning for submission, the enjoyment of sensuous pleasure and the fear of it, are all products of the social process. The most beautiful as well as the most ugly inclinations of man are not part of a fixed and biologically given human nature, but result from the social process which creates man. In other words, society has not only a suppressing function—although it has that too—but

it has also a creative function. Man's nature, his passions, and anxieties are a cultural product; as a matter of fact, man himself is the most important creation and achievement of the continuous human effort, the record of which we call history.

It is the very task of social psychology to understand this process of man's creation in history. Why do certain definite changes of man's character take place from one historical epoch to another? Why is the spirit of the Renaissance different from that of the Middle Ages? Why is the character structure of man in monopolistic capitalism different from that in the nineteenth century? Social psychology has to explain why new abilities and new passions, bad or good, come into existence. Thus we find, for instance, that from the Renaissance up until our day men have been filled with a burning ambition for fame, while this striving which today seems so natural was little present in man of the medieval society. In the same period men developed a sense for the beauty of nature which they did not possess before. Again, in the Northern European countries, from the sixteenth century on, man developed an obsessional craving to work which had been lacking in a free man before that period.

But man is not only made by history—history is made by man. The solution of this seeming contradiction constitutes the field of social psychology. Its task is to show not only how passions, desires, anxieties change and develop as a *result* of the social process, but also how man's energies thus shaped into specific forms in their turn become *productive forces, molding the social process*. Thus, for instance, the craving for fame and success and the drive to work are forces without which modern capitalism could not have developed; without these and a number of other human forces man would have lacked the impetus to act according to the social and economic requirements of the modern commercial and industrial system.

It follows from what we have said that the viewpoint presented . . . differs from Freud's inasmuch as it emphatically disagrees with his interpretation of history as the result of psychological forces that in themselves are not socially conditioned. It disagrees as emphatically with those theories which neglect the rôle of the human factor as one of the dynamic elements in the social process. This criticism is directed not only against sociological theories which explicitly wish to eliminate psychological problems from sociology (like those of Durkheim and his school) but also against those theories that are more or less tinged with behavioristic psychology. . . . Only a dynamic psychology, the foundations of which have been laid by Freud, can get further than paying lip service to the human factor. Though there

is no fixed human nature, we cannot regard human nature as being infinitely malleable and able to adapt itself to any kind of conditions without developing a psychological dynamism of its own. Human nature, though being the product of historical evolution, has certain inherent mechanisms and laws, to discover which is the task of psychology.

At this point it seems necessary for the full understanding of what has been said so far and also of what follows to discuss the notion of *adaptation*. This discussion offers at the same time an illustration of what we mean by psychological mechanisms and laws.

It seems useful to differentiate between "static" and "dynamic" adaptation. By static adaptation we mean such an adaptation to patterns as leaves the whole character structure unchanged and implies only the adoption of a new habit. An example of this kind of adaptation is the change from the Chinese habit of eating to the Western habit of using fork and knife. A Chinese coming to America will adapt himself to this new pattern, but this adaptation in itself has little effect on his personality; it does not arouse new drives or character traits.

By dynamic adaptation we refer to the kind of adaptation that occurs, for example, when a boy submits to the commands of his strict and threatening father—being too much afraid of him to do otherwise—and becomes a "good" boy. While he adapts himself to the necessities of the situation, something happens in him. He may develop an intense hostility against his father, which he represses, since it would be too dangerous to express it or even to be aware of it. This repressed hostility, however, though not manifest, is a dynamic factor in his character structure. It may create new anxiety and thus lead to still deeper submission; it may set up a vague defiance, directed against no one in particular but rather toward life in general. While here, too, as in the first case, an individual adapts himself to certain external circumstances, this kind of adaptation creates something new in him, arouses new drives and new anxieties. Every neurosis is an example of this dynamic adaptation; it is essentially an adaptation to such external conditions (particularly those of early childhood) as are in themselves irrational and, generally speaking, unfavorable to the growth and development of the child. Similarly, such socio-psychological phenomena as are comparable to neurotic phenomena . . . like the presence of strong destructive or sadistic impulses in social groups, offer an example of dynamic adaptation to social conditions that are irrational and harmful to the development of men.

Besides the question of what *kind* of adaptation occurs, other questions need to be answered: What is it that forces man to adapt himself to almost

any conceivable condition of life, and what are the limits of his adaptability?

In answering these questions the first phenomenon we have to discuss is the fact that there are certain sectors in man's nature that are more flexible and adaptable than others. Those strivings and character traits by which men differ from each other show a great amount of elasticity and malleability: love, destructiveness, sadism, the tendency to submit, the lust for power, detachment, the desire for self-aggrandizement, the passion for thrift, the enjoyment of sensual pleasure, and the fear of sensuality. These and many other strivings and fears to be found in man develop as a reaction to certain life conditions. They are not particularly flexible, for once they have become part of a person's character, they do not easily disappear or change into some other drive. But they are flexible in the sense that individuals, particularly in their childhood, develop the one or the other need according to the whole mode of life they find themselves in. None of these needs is fixed and rigid as if it were an innate part of human nature which develops and has to be satisfied under all circumstances.

In contrast to those needs, there are others which are an indispensable part of human nature and imperatively need satisfaction, namely, those needs that are rooted in the physiological organization of man, like hunger, thirst, the need for sleep, and so on. For each of those needs there exists a certain threshold beyond which lack of satisfaction is unbearable, and when this threshold is transcended the tendency to satisfy the need assumes the quality of an all-powerful striving. All these physiologically conditioned needs can be summarized in the notion of a need for self-preservation. This need for self-preservation is that part of human nature which needs satisfaction under all circumstances and therefore forms the primary motive of human behavior.

To put this in a simple formula: man must eat, drink, sleep, protect himself against enemies, and so forth. In order to do all this he must work and produce. "Work," however, is nothing general or abstract. Work is always concrete work, that is, a specific kind of work in a specific kind of economic system. A person may work as a slave in a feudal system, as a peasant in an Indian pueblo, as an independent businessman in capitalistic society, as a salesgirl in a modern department store, as a worker on the endless belt of a big factory. These different kinds of work require entirely different personality traits and make for different kinds of relatedness to others. When man is born, the stage is set for him. He has to eat and drink, and therefore he has to work; and this means he has to work under the particular conditions and in the ways that are determined for him by the kind of society



into which he is born. Both factors, his need to live and the social system, in principle are unalterable by him as an individual, and they are the factors which determine the development of those other traits that show greater plasticity.

Thus the mode of life, as it is determined for the individual by the peculiarity of an economic system, becomes the primary factor in determining his whole character structure, because the imperative need for self-preservation forces him to accept the conditions under which he has to live. This does not mean that he cannot try, together with others, to effect certain economic and political changes; but primarily his personality is molded by the particular mode of life, as he has already been confronted with it as a child through the medium of the family, which represents all the features that are typical of a particular society or class.<sup>2</sup>

The physiologically conditioned needs are not the only imperative part of man's nature. There is another part just as compelling, one which is not rooted in bodily processes but in the very essence of the human mode and practice of life: the need to be related to the world outside oneself, the need to avoid aloneness. To feel completely alone and isolated leads to mental disintegration just as physical starvation leads to death. This relatedness to others is not identical with physical contact. An individual may be alone in a physical sense for many years and yet he may be related to ideas, values, or at least social patterns that give him a feeling of communion and "belonging." On the other hand, he may live among people and yet be overcome with an utter feeling of isolation, the outcome of which, if it transcends a certain limit, is the state of insanity which schizophrenic disturbances represent. This lack of relatedness to values, symbols, patterns, we may call moral aloneness and state that moral aloneness is as intolerable as the physical aloneness, or rather that physical aloneness becomes unbearable only if it implies also moral aloneness. The spiritual relatedness to the world can assume many forms; the monk in his cell who believes in God and the political prisoner kept in isolation who feels one with his fellow fighters are not alone morally. Neither is the English gentleman who wears his din-

<sup>2</sup> I should like to warn against one confusion which is frequently experienced in regard to this problem. The economic structure of a society in determining the mode of life of the individual operates as *condition* for personality development. These *economic conditions* are entirely different from *subjective economic motives*, such as the desire for material wealth which was looked upon by many writers, from the Renaissance on up to certain Marxist authors who failed to understand Marx's basic concepts, as the dominant motive of human behavior. As a matter of fact, the all-absorbing wish for material wealth is a need peculiar only to certain cultures, and different economic conditions can create personality traits which abhor material wealth or are indifferent to it.

ner jacket in the most exotic surroundings nor the petty bourgeois who, though being deeply isolated from his fellow men, feels one with his nation or its symbols. The kind of relatedness to the world may be noble or trivial, but even being related to the basest kind of pattern is immensely preferable to being alone. Religion and nationalism, as well as any custom and any belief however absurd and degrading, if it only connects the individual with others, are refuges from what man most dreads: isolation.

The compelling need to avoid moral isolation has been described most forcefully by Balzac in this passage from *The Inventor's Suffering*:

But learn one thing, impress it upon your mind which is still so malleable: man has a horror for aloneness. And of all kinds of aloneness, moral aloneness is the most terrible. The first hermits lived with God, they inhabited the world which is most populated, the world of the spirits. The first thought of man, be he a leper or a prisoner, a sinner or an invalid, is: to have a companion of his fate. In order to satisfy this drive which is life itself, he applies all his strength, all his power, the energy of his whole life. Would Satan have found companions without this overpowering craving? On this theme one could write a whole epic, which would be the prologue to *Paradise Lost* because *Paradise Lost* is nothing but the apology of rebellion.

Any attempt to answer the question why the fear of isolation is so powerful in man would lead us far away from the main road we are following. . . . However, in order not to give the reader the impression that the need to feel one with others has some mysterious quality, I should like to indicate in what direction I think the answer lies.

One important element is the fact that men cannot live without some sort of co-operation with others. In any conceivable kind of culture man needs to co-operate with others if he wants to survive, whether for the purpose of defending himself against enemies or dangers of nature, or in order that he may be able to work and produce. Even Robinson Crusoe was accompanied by his man Friday; without him he would probably not only have become insane but would actually have died. Each person experiences this need for the help of others very drastically as a child. On account of the factual inability of the human child to take care of itself with regard to all-important functions, communication with others is a matter of life and death for the child. The possibility of being left alone is necessarily the most serious threat to the child's whole existence.

There is another element, however, which makes the need to "belong" so compelling: the fact of subjective self-consciousness, of the faculty of thinking, by which man is aware of himself as an individual entity, different from

nature and other people. Although the degree of this awareness varies . . . its existence confronts man with a problem which is essentially human: by being aware of himself as distinct from nature and other people, by being aware—even very dimly—of death, sickness, aging, he necessarily feels his insignificance and smallness in comparison with the universe and all others who are not “he.” Unless he belonged somewhere, unless his life had some meaning and direction, he would feel like a particle of dust and be overcome by his individual insignificance. He would not be able to relate himself to any system which would give meaning and direction to his life, he would be filled with doubt, and this doubt eventually would paralyze his ability to act—that is, to live. . . .

#### CHAPTER II: THE EMERGENCE OF THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE AMBIGUITY OF FREEDOM

Before we come to our main topic—the question of what freedom means to modern man, and why and how he tries to escape from it—we must first discuss a concept which may seem to be somewhat removed from actuality. It is, however, a premise necessary for the understanding of the analysis of freedom in modern society. I mean the concept that freedom characterizes human existence as such, and furthermore that its meaning changes according to the degree of man’s awareness and conception of himself as an independent and separate being.

The social history of man started with his emerging from a state of oneness with the natural world to an awareness of himself as an entity separate from surrounding nature and men. Yet this awareness remained very dim over long periods of history. The individual continued to be closely tied to the natural and social world from which he emerged; while being partly aware of himself as a separate entity, he felt also part of the world around him. The growing process of the emergence of the individual from his original ties, a process which we may call “individuation,” seems to have reached its peak in modern history in the centuries between the Reformation and the present.

In the life history of an individual we find the same process. A child is born when it is no longer one with its mother and becomes a biological entity separate from her. Yet, while this biological separation is the beginning of individual human existence, the child remains functionally one with its mother for a considerable period.

To the degree to which the individual, figuratively speaking, has not yet completely severed the umbilical cord which fastens him to the outside

world, he lacks freedom; but these ties give him security and a feeling of belonging and of being rooted somewhere. I wish to call these ties that exist before the process of individuation has resulted in the complete emergence of an individual "primary ties." They are organic in the sense that they are a part of normal human development; they imply a lack of individuality, but they also give security and orientation to the individual. They are the ties that connect the child with its mother, the member of a primitive community with his clan and nature, or the medieval man with the Church and his social caste. Once the stage of complete individuation is reached and the individual is free from these primary ties, he is confronted with a new task: to orient and root himself in the world and to find security in other ways than those which were characteristic of his preindividualistic existence. Freedom then has a different meaning from the one it had before this stage of evolution is reached. It is necessary to stop here and to clarify these concepts by discussing them more concretely in connection with individual and social development.

The comparatively sudden change from foetal into human existence and the cutting off of the umbilical cord mark the independence of the infant from the mother's body. But this independence is only real in the crude sense of the separation of the two bodies. In a functional sense, the infant remains part of the mother. It is fed, carried, and taken care of in every vital respect by the mother. Slowly the child comes to regard the mother and other objects as entities apart from itself. One factor in this process is the neurological and the general physical development of the child, its ability to grasp objects—physically and mentally—and to master them. Through its own activity it experiences a world outside of itself. The process of individuation is furthered by that of education. This process entails a number of frustrations and prohibitions, which change the rôle of the mother into that of a person with different aims which conflict with the child's wishes, and often into that of a hostile and dangerous person. This antagonism, which is one part of the educational process though by no means the whole, is an important factor in sharpening the distinction between the "I" and the "thou."

A few months elapse after birth before the child even recognizes another person as such and is able to react with a smile, and it is years before the child ceases to confuse itself with the universe. Until then it shows the particular kind of egocentricity typical of children, an egocentricity which does not exclude tenderness for and interest in others, since "others" are not yet definitely experienced as really separate from itself. For the same reason the child's leaning on authority in these first years has also a different mean-



ing from the leaning on authority later on. The parents, or whoever the authority may be, are not yet regarded as being a fundamentally separate entity; they are part of the child's universe, and this universe is still part of the child; submission to them, therefore, has a different quality from the kind of submission that exists once two individuals have become really separate.

A remarkably keen description of a ten-year-old child's sudden awareness of its own individuality is given by R. Hughes in *A High Wind in Jamaica*:

And then an event did occur, to Emily, of considerable importance. She suddenly realised who she was. There is little reason that one can see why it should not have happened to her five years earlier, or even five years later; and none, why it should have come that particular afternoon. She had been playing house in a nook right in the bows, behind the windlass (on which she had hung a devil's-claw as a door knocker); and tiring of it was walking rather aimlessly aft, thinking vaguely about some bees and a fairy queen, when it suddenly flashed into her mind that she was *she*. She stopped dead, and began looking over all of her person which came within the range of her eyes. She could not see much except a fore-shortened view of the front of her frock, and her hands when she lifted them for inspection; but it was enough for her to form a rough idea of the little body she suddenly realised to be hers.

She began to laugh, rather mockingly. "Well!" she thought, in effect: "Fancy *you*, of all people, going and getting caught like this!—You can't get out of it now, not for a very long time: you'll have to go through with being a child, and growing up, and getting old, before you'll be quit of this mad prank!"

Determined to avoid any interruption of this highly important occasion, she began to climb the ratlines, on her way to her favorite perch at the masthead. Each time she moved an arm or a leg in this simple action, however, it struck her with fresh amazement to find them obeying her so readily. Memory told her, of course, that they had always done so before: but before, she had never realised how surprising this was. Once settled on her perch, she began examining the skin of her hands with the utmost care: for it was *hers*. She slipped a shoulder out of the top of her frock; and having peeped in to make sure she was really continuous under her clothes, she shrugged it up to touch her cheek. The contact of her face and the warm bare hollow of her shoulder gave her a comfortable thrill, as if it was the caress of some kind friend. But whether her feeling came to her through her cheek or her shoulder, which was the caresser and which the caressed, that no analysis could tell her.

Once fully convinced of this astonishing fact, that she was now Emily Bas-Thornton (why she inserted the "now" she did not know, for she certainly imagined no transmigrational nonsense of having been anyone else before), she began seriously to reckon its implications.

The more the child grows and to the extent to which primary ties are cut off, the more it develops a quest for freedom and independence. But the fate

of this quest can only be fully understood if we realize the dialectic quality in this process of growing individuation.

This process has two aspects: one is that the child grows stronger physically, emotionally, and mentally. In each of these spheres intensity and activity grow. At the same time, these spheres become more and more integrated. An organized structure guided by the individual's will and reason develops. If we call this organized and integrated whole of the personality the self, we can also say that the *one side of the growing process of individuation is the growth of self-strength*. The limits of the growth of individuation and the self are set, partly by individual conditions, but essentially by social conditions. For although the differences between individuals in this respect appear to be great, every society is characterized by a certain level of individuation beyond which the normal individual cannot go.

The other aspect of the process of individuation is *growing aloneness*. The primary ties offer security and basic unity with the world outside of oneself. To the extent of which the child emerges from that world it becomes aware of being alone, of being an entity separate from all others. This separation from a world, which in comparison with one's own individual existence is overwhelmingly strong and powerful, and often threatening and dangerous, creates a feeling of powerlessness and anxiety. As long as one was an integral part of that world, unaware of the possibilities and responsibilities of individual action, one did not need to be afraid of it. When one has become an individual, one stands alone and faces the world in all its perilous and overpowering aspects.

Impulses arise to give up one's individuality, to overcome the feeling of aloneness and powerlessness by completely submerging oneself in the world outside. These impulses, however, and the new ties arising from them, are not identical with the primary ties which have been cut off in the process of growth itself. Just as a child can never return to the mother's womb physically, so it can never reverse, psychically, the process of individuation. Attempts to do so necessarily assume the character of submission, in which the basic contradiction between the authority and the child who submits to it is never eliminated. Consciously the child may feel secure and satisfied, but unconsciously it realizes that the price it pays is giving up strength and the integrity of its self. Thus the result of submission is the very opposite of what it was to be: submission increases the child's insecurity and at the same time creates hostility and rebelliousness, which is the more frightening since it is directed against the very persons on whom the child has remained—or become—dependent.

However, submission is not the only way of avoiding aloneness and anxiety. The other way, the only one which is productive and does not end in an insoluble conflict, is that of *spontaneous relationship to man and nature*, a relationship that connects the individual with the world without eliminating his individuality. This kind of relationship—the foremost expressions of which are love and productive work—are rooted in the integration and strength of the total personality and are therefore subject to the very limits that exist for the growth of the self.

The problem of submission and of spontaneous activity as two possible results of growing individuation . . . [is a complicated one, and] here I only wish to point to the general principle, the dialectic process which results from growing individuation and from growing freedom of the individual. The child becomes more free *to* develop and express its own individual self unhampered by those ties which were limiting it. But the child also becomes more free *from* a world which gave it security and reassurance. The process of individuation is one of growing strength and integration of its individual personality, but it is at the same time a process in which the original identity with others is lost and in which the child becomes more separate from them. This growing separation may result in an isolation that has the quality of desolation and creates intense anxiety and insecurity; it may result in a new kind of closeness and a solidarity with others if the child has been able to develop the inner strength and productivity which are the premise of this new kind of relatedness to the world.

If every step in the direction of separation and individuation were matched by corresponding growth of the self, the development of the child would be harmonious. This does not occur, however. While the process of individuation takes place automatically, the growth of the self is hampered for a number of individual and social reasons. The lag between these two trends results in an unbearable feeling of isolation and powerlessness, and this in its turn leads to psychic mechanisms . . . *of escape*.

Phylogenetically, too, the history of man can be characterized as a process of growing individuation and growing freedom. Man emerges from the prehuman stage by the first steps in the direction of becoming free from coercive instincts. If we understand by instinct a specific action pattern which is determined by inherited neurological structures, a clear-cut trend can be observed in the animal kingdom. The lower an animal is in the scale of development, the more are its adaptation to nature and all its activities controlled by instinctive and reflex action mechanisms. The famous social organi-

zations of some insects are created entirely by instincts. On the other hand, the higher an animal is in the scale of development, the more flexibility of action pattern and the less completeness of structural adjustment do we find at birth. This development reaches its peak with man. He is the most helpless of all animals at birth. His adaptation to nature is based essentially on the process of learning, not on instinctual determination. "Instinct . . . is a diminishing if not a disappearing category in high animal forms, especially in the human."

Human existence begins when the lack of fixation of action by instincts exceeds a certain point; when the adaptation to nature loses its coercive character; when the way to act is no longer fixed by hereditarily given mechanisms. In other words, *human existence and freedom are from the beginning inseparable*. Freedom is here used not in its positive sense of "freedom to" but in its negative sense of "freedom from," namely freedom from instinctual determination of his actions.

Freedom in the sense just discussed is an ambiguous gift. Man is born without the equipment for appropriate action which the animal possesses; he is dependent on his parents for a longer time than any animal, and his reactions to his surroundings are less quick and less effective than the automatically regulated instinctive actions are. He goes through all the dangers and fears which this lack of instinctive equipment implies. Yet this very helplessness of man is the basis from which human development springs; *man's biological weakness is the condition of human culture*.

From the beginning of his existence man is confronted with the choice between different courses of action. In the animal there is an uninterrupted chain of reactions starting with a stimulus, like hunger, and ending with a more or less strictly determined course of action, which does away with the tension created by the stimulus. In man that chain is interrupted. The stimulus is there but the kind of satisfaction is "open," that is, he must choose between different courses of action. Instead of a predetermined instinctive action, man has to weigh possible courses of action in his mind; he starts to think. He changes his rôle toward nature from that of purely passive adaptation to an active one: he produces. He invents tools and, while thus mastering nature, he separates himself from it more and more. He becomes dimly aware of himself—or rather of his group—as not being identical with nature. It dawns upon him that his is a tragic fate: to be part of nature, and yet to transcend it. He becomes aware of death as his ultimate fate even if he tries to deny it in manifold phantasies.



One particularly telling representation of the fundamental relation between man and freedom is offered in the biblical myth of man's expulsion from paradise.

The myth identifies the beginning of human history with an act of choice, but it puts all emphasis on the sinfulness of this first act of freedom and the suffering resulting from it. Man and woman live in the Garden of Eden in complete harmony with each other and with nature. There is peace and no necessity to work; there is no choice, no freedom, no thinking either. Man is forbidden to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. He acts against God's command, he breaks through the state of harmony with nature of which he is a part without transcending it. From the standpoint of the Church which represented authority, this is essentially sin. From the standpoint of man, however, this is the beginning of human freedom. Acting against God's orders means freeing himself from coercion, emerging from the unconscious existence of prehuman life to the level of man. Acting against the command of authority, committing a sin, is in its positive human aspect the first act of freedom, that is, the first *human* act. In the myth the sin in its formal aspect is the acting against God's command; in its material aspect it is the eating of the tree of knowledge. The act of disobedience as an act of freedom is the beginning of reason. The myth speaks of other consequences of the first act of freedom. The original harmony between man and nature is broken. God proclaims war between man and woman, and war between nature and man. Man has become separate from nature, he has taken the first step toward becoming human by becoming an "individual." He has committed the first act of freedom. The myth emphasizes the suffering resulting from this act. To transcend nature, to be alienated from nature and from another human being, finds man naked, ashamed. He is alone and free, yet powerless and afraid. The newly won freedom appears as a curse; he is free *from* the sweet bondage of paradise, but he is not free *to* govern himself, to realize his individuality.

"Freedom from" is not identical with positive freedom, with "freedom to." The emergence of man from nature is a long-drawn-out process; to a large extent he remains tied to the world from which he emerged; he remains part of nature—the soil he lives on, the sun and moon and stars, the trees and flowers, the animals, and the group of people with whom he is connected by the ties of blood. Primitive religions bear testimony to man's feeling of oneness with nature. Animate and inanimate nature are part of his human world or, as one may also put it, he is still part of the natural world.

These primary ties block his full human development; they stand in the

way of the development of his reason and his critical capacities; they let him recognize himself and others only through the medium of his, or their, participation in a clan, a social or religious community, and not as human beings; in other words, they block his development as a free, self-determining, productive individual. But although this is one aspect, there is another one. This identity with nature, clan, religion, gives the individual security. He belongs to, he is rooted in, a structuralized whole in which he has an unquestionable place. He may suffer from hunger or suppression, but he does not suffer from the worst of all pains—complete aloneness and doubt.

We see that the process of growing human freedom has the same dialectic character that we have noticed in the process of individual growth. On the one hand it is a process of growing strength and integration, mastery of nature, growing power of human reason, and growing solidarity with other human beings. But on the other hand this growing individuation means growing isolation, insecurity, and thereby growing doubt concerning one's own rôle in the universe, the meaning of one's life, and with all that a growing feeling of one's own powerlessness and insignificance as an individual.

If the process of the development of mankind had been harmonious, if it had followed a certain plan, then both sides of the development—the growing strength and the growing individuation—would have been exactly balanced. As it is, the history of mankind is one of conflict and strife. Each step in the direction of growing individuation threatened people with new insecurities. Primary bonds once severed cannot be mended; once paradise is lost, man cannot return to it. There is only one possible, productive solution for the relationship of individualized man with the world: his active solidarity with all men and his spontaneous activity, love and work, which unite him again with the world, not by primary ties but as a free and independent individual.

However, if the economic, social and political conditions on which the whole process of human individuation depends, do not offer a basis for the realization of individuality in the sense just mentioned, while at the same time people have lost those ties which gave them security, this lag makes freedom an unbearable burden. It then becomes identical with doubt, with a kind of life which lacks meaning and direction. Powerful tendencies arise to escape from this kind of freedom into submission or some kind of relationship to man and the world which promises relief from uncertainty, even if it deprives the individual of his freedom.

European and American history since the end of the Middle Ages is the history of the full emergence of the individual. It is a process which started in

Italy, in the Renaissance, and which only now seems to have come to a climax. It took over four hundred years to break down the medieval world and to free people from the most apparent restraints. But while in many respects the individual has grown, has developed mentally and emotionally, and participates in cultural achievements in a degree unheard-of before, the lag between "freedom from" and "freedom to" has grown too. The result of this disproportion between freedom *from* any tie and the lack of possibilities for the positive realization of freedom and individuality has led, in Europe, to a panicky flight from freedom into new ties or at least into complete indifference. . . .

## JEAN PIAGET

**J**EAN PIAGET, one of the most prolific and suggestive of contemporary students of child psychology, was born in 1896, in Switzerland, and educated at the Universities of Neuchâtel, Zurich, and Paris. His academic career has been varied. He has held the posts of professor of philosophy at the University of Neuchâtel, professor of child psychology and history of scientific thought at the University of Geneva, and professor of general psychology at Lausanne. In addition he has served as Director of the International Bureau of Education as well as Co-Director of the Institute for Scientific Education. Throughout all of these associations Piaget has continued his researches, interviews, and experiments into the psychology of the child.

Within the past few decades numerous lines of investigation into child behavior have been developed. Researches into abnormal psychology, under the impact of Freud, have turned to the study of the child for a broader view of the genesis of adult psychological life. Behavioristic psychology has contributed a large share of understanding of infant and child development as a result of its concern to validate and expand its views and hypotheses on learning. And with the growth of newer theories and practices of education—in which John Dewey's influence has been significant—it was quite natural to inspect more closely the changing relations of the child to its social environment. However, Piaget's work has not been grounded on these traditions, but has been generated primarily by an interest in reconstructing the world of the child and in discovering his unique and distinctive character. Through ingenious techniques of interviews and observations of children he has tried to uncover those features peculiar to the moral and intellectual development of the child. His works have touched on the themes of *Language and Thought of the Child* (1926), *Judgment and Reasoning in the Child* (1928), *The Child's Conception of the World* (1929), and *The Moral Judgment of the Child* (1932), from which the present selection, translated from the French by Marjorie Gabain, has been taken.

For Piaget an essential trait of the child is the fact that he is an ego-centered creature. The process of maturation involves a growing awareness and appreciation in the child of his relations to his physical and social environments. This awareness for Piaget plays a decisive role in the shaping of the child's moral life. Throughout a large part of his career the child is totally dependent upon others for his norms and rules of conduct. His relation to them is one of acceptance and imitation. But, as observed in the operation of games, with the child's more intimate understanding of his fellow playmates comes a more functional and flexible orientation toward his rules of conduct. Such norms become adjusted to the needs, circumstances, and values of *human* individuals, and here the notions of equity and justice begin to take on meaning. This transition from *heteronomy* to *autonomy*, in Kantian terms, is considered by Piaget to represent the shedding of ego-centrism and the growth of moral individuality and freedom.



*THE MORAL JUDGMENT OF THE CHILD*

## CHAPTER I: THE RULES OF THE GAME

Children's games constitute the most admirable social institutions. The game of marbles, for instance, as played by boys, contains an extremely complex system of rules, that is to say, a code of laws, a jurisprudence of its own. Only the psychologist, whose profession obliges him to become familiar with this instance of common law, and to get at the implicit morality underlying it, is in a position to estimate the extraordinary wealth of these rules by the difficulty he experiences in mastering their details.

If we wish to gain any understanding of child morality, it is obviously with the analysis of such facts as these that we must begin. All morality consists of a system of rules, and the essence of all morality is to be sought for in the respect which the individual acquires for these rules. . . .

Now, most of the moral rules which the child learns to respect he receives from adults, which means that he receives them after they have been fully elaborated, and often elaborated, not in relation to him and as they are needed, but once and for all and through an uninterrupted succession of earlier adult generations.

In the case of the very simplest social games, on the contrary, we are in the presence of rules which have been elaborated by the children alone. It is of no moment whether these games strike us as "moral" or not in their contents. As psychologists we must ourselves adopt the point of view, not of the adult conscience, but of child morality. Now, the rules of the game of marbles are handed down, just like so-called moral realities, from one generation to another, and are preserved solely by the respect that is felt for them by individuals. The sole difference is that the relations in this case are only those that exist between children. The little boys who are beginning to play are gradually trained by the older ones in respect for the law; and in any case they aspire from their hearts to the virtue, supremely characteristic of human dignity, which consists in making a correct use of the customary practices of a game. As to the older ones, it is in their power to alter the rules. If this is not "morality," then where does morality begin? At least, it is respect for rules, and it appertains to an enquiry like ours to begin with the study of facts of this order. Of course the phenomena relating to the game of

---

This selection has been reprinted from Jean Piaget, *The Moral Judgment of the Child* (pp. 1-3, 16-19, 225-231, 273-274, 283-285, 314-325, 401-402, 404-414, 1st. American ed., 1948, The Free Press, Glencoe, Ill.) by permission of Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., London, the copyright holder.

marbles are not among the most primitive. Before playing with his equals, the child is influenced by his parents. He is subjected from his cradle to a multiplicity of regulations, and even before language he becomes conscious of certain obligations. These circumstances even exercise, as we shall see, an undeniable influence upon the way in which the rules of games are elaborated. But in the case of play institutions, adult intervention is at any rate reduced to the minimum. We are therefore in the presence here of realities which, if not amongst the most elementary, should be classed nevertheless amongst the most spontaneous and the most instructive.

With regard to game rules there are two phenomena which it is particularly easy to study: first the *practice* of rules, *i.e.* the way in which children of different ages effectively apply rules: second the *consciousness* of rules, *i.e.* the idea which children of different ages form of the character of these game rules, whether of something obligatory and sacred or of something subject to their own choice, whether of heteronomy or autonomy. . . .

From the point of view of the practice or application of rules four successive stages can be distinguished.

A first stage of a purely *motor* and *individual* character, during which the child handles the marbles at the dictation of his desires and motor habits. This leads to the formation of more or less ritualized schemata, but since play is still purely individual, one can only talk of motor rules and not of truly collective rules.

The second may be called *egocentric* for the following reasons. This stage begins at the moment when the child receives from outside the example of codified rules, that is to say, some time between the ages of two and five. But though the child imitates this example, he continues to play either by himself without bothering to find play-fellows, or with others, but without trying to win, and therefore without attempting to unify the different ways of playing. In other words, children of this stage, even when they are playing together, play each one "on his own" (everyone can win at once) and without regard for any codification of rules. This dual character, combining imitation of others with a purely individual use of the examples received, we have designated by the term *Egocentrism*.

A third stage appears between 7 and 8, which we shall call the stage of incipient *cooperation*. Each player now tries to win, and all, therefore, begin to concern themselves with the question of mutual control and of unification of the rules. But while a certain agreement may be reached in the course of one game, ideas about the rules in general are still rather vague. In other words, children of 7-8, who belong to the same class at school and are there-

fore constantly playing with each other, give, when they are questioned separately, disparate and often entirely contradictory accounts of the rules observed in playing marbles.

Finally, between the years of 11 and 12, appears a fourth stage, which is that of the *codification of rules*. Not only is every detail of procedure in the game fixed, but the actual code of rules to be observed is known to the whole society. There is remarkable concordance in the information given by children of 10-12 belonging to the same class at school, when they are questioned on the rules of the game and their possible variations.

These stages must of course be taken only for what they are worth. It is convenient for the purposes of exposition to divide the children up in age-classes or stages, but the facts present themselves as a continuum which cannot be cut up into sections. This continuum, moreover, is not linear in character, and its general direction can only be observed by schematizing the material and ignoring the minor oscillations which render it infinitely complicated in detail. So that ten children chosen at random will perhaps not give the impression of a steady advance which gradually emerges from the interrogatory put to the hundred odd subjects examined by us at Geneva and Neuchâtel.

If, now, we turn to the consciousness of rules we shall find a progression that is even more elusive in detail, but no less clearly marked if taken on a big scale. We may express this by saying that the progression runs through three stages, of which the second begins during the egocentric stage and ends toward the middle of the stage of cooperation (9-10), and of which the third covers the remainder of this cooperating stage and the whole of the stage marked by the codification of rules.

During the first stage rules are not yet coercive in character, either because they are purely motor, or else (at the beginning of the egocentric stage) because they are received, as it were, unconsciously, and as interesting examples rather than as obligatory realities.

During the second stage (apogee of egocentric and first half of cooperating stage) rules are regarded as sacred and untouchable, emanating from adults and lasting forever. Every suggested alteration strikes the child as a transgression.

Finally, during the third stage, a rule is looked upon as a law due to mutual consent, which you must respect if you want to be loyal but which it is permissible to alter on the condition of enlisting general opinion on your side.

The correlation between the three stages in the development of the con-

sciousness of rules and the four stages relating to their practical observance is of course only a statistical correlation and therefore very crude. But broadly speaking the relation seems to us indisputable. The collective rule is at first something external to the individual and consequently sacred to him; then, as he gradually makes it his own, it comes to that extent to be felt as the free product of mutual agreement and an autonomous conscience. And with regard to practical use, it is only natural that a mystical respect for laws should be accompanied by a rudimentary knowledge and application of their contents, while a rational and well-founded respect is accompanied by an effective application of each rule in detail.

There would therefore seem to be two types of respect for rules corresponding to two types of social behavior. This conclusion deserves to be closely examined, for if it holds good, it should be of the greatest value to the analysis of child morality. One can see at once all that it suggests in regard to the relation between child and adult. Take the insubordination of the child towards its parents and teachers, joined to its sincere respect for the commands it receives and its extraordinary mental docility. Could not this be due to that complex of attitudes which we can observe during the egocentric stage and which combines so paradoxically an unstable practice of the law with a mystical attitude towards it? And will not cooperation between adult and child, in so far as it can be realized and in so far as it is facilitated by cooperation between children themselves, supply the key to the interiorization of commands and to the autonomy of the moral consciousness? . . .

### CHAPTER III: COOPERATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE

#### IDEA OF JUSTICE

. . . Difficult as is the interrogatory on such delicate points, and deeply tinged with the phraseology of adult morality as are the answers, taking things broadly, the results we have obtained do nevertheless seem to us to converge. They seem to point to the existence of a sort of law of evolution in the moral development of the child. It would seem that we have to distinguish in the domain of justice between two types of reaction, one founded on the notion of expiation, the other on that of reciprocity. And though representatives of both types are to be found at all ages, it would seem nevertheless that the second tended to predominate over the first.

The choice of punishments is the first thing that brings this out. The little ones prefer the most severe so as to emphasize the necessity of the punishment itself; the other children are more in favour of the measures of



reciprocity which simply serve to make the transgressor feel that the bond of solidarity has been broken and that things must be put right again. It is also brought out by the reactions of the subjects whom we questioned on the subject of relapses. The little ones think that a well-punished child cannot repeat its offense because it has realized the external and coercive authority of the rule in question, whereas many of the older ones hold that a child to whom, even without punishment, the consequences of his actions have been thoroughly explained is less likely to begin again than if he had been punished and nothing more. The same thing, finally, would seem to be confirmed by the short interrogatory on the utility and soundness of punishments in general: the little ones introduce an expiatory element into all their answers, whereas the older children are content to justify punishments by their preventive value. On this point, indeed, these older children take up an attitude that definitely contradicts that which they had been observed to hold in the last interrogatory. This is because here they feel concerned to defend in their own way the views that are generally held by those around them, whereas in the stories about relapsing the answers are more personal and more spontaneous.

These two types of attitude, which we believe we have been able to dissociate from one another, are naturally, in so far as they correspond to real facts, connected with the two moralities which we have so far traced in the behaviour and judgment of the child. The notion of expiation corresponds, of course, to the morality of heteronomy and duty pure and simple. For one whose moral law consists solely of rules imposed by the superior will of adults and older children, it follows that the disobedience of small children will naturally entail the anger of their elders and this anger will take the concrete form of some kind of "arbitrary" suffering inflicted upon the offender. This reaction on the part of the adult is legitimate in the eyes of the child in so far as the relation of obedience has been broken and in so far as the suffering imposed is in proportion to the fault that has been committed. In the ethics of authority any other punishment is incomprehensible. And since there is no reciprocity between commander and commanded, what happens is that even if the former inflicts upon the latter only a "motivated" punishment (simple reciprocity, consequences of the act, etc.) the child will see nothing in it but an expiatory chastisement. Punishment by reciprocity, on the other hand, corresponds with cooperation and an autonomous ethic. Indeed it is impossible to see how the relation of mutual respect, which is the foundation of all cooperation, could possibly give rise to the idea of expiation or render it legitimate. It is, on the contrary, easy to see how cen-

sure (which is at the origin of any punishment whatsoever) can, in the case of cooperation, be accompanied by definite measures which have been taken in order to mark the break in the bond of reciprocity or to make the offender understand the consequences of his acts.

If, then, we admit this kinship between the two types of attitude relating to retributive justice and the two moralities which we have distinguished up to the present, what explanation are we to give of the genesis and destiny of each of these attitudes?

With regard to the first type, we believe that though partly rooted in the child's instinctive reactions, it is fashioned primarily by adult constraint. We shall have to analyse very closely this super-position of social influences on the spontaneous attitude of the individual if we wish to gain a more exact understanding of the idea of expiation.

Among the instinctive tendencies must above all be mentioned the vindictive tendencies and compassion. For both develop independently of adult pressure. Defensive and aggressive reactions are sufficient to explain how the individual, from at first inflicting pain upon his adversary in self-defence comes to make him suffer in response to all offenses. Vengeance is thus contemporary with the earliest defensive manifestations. It is very difficult to say, for example, whether the fit of rage of a baby of a few months old merely expresses the need to resist unwelcome treatment, or whether it already contains an element of revenge. At any rate, as soon as blows appear (and they do so at an extraordinarily early date, independently of any adult influence) it would be hard to say where fighting ended and revenge began. Now, as Mme Antipoff in a short study on compassion has very well shown, vindictive tendencies admit of being "polarized" very soon, under the influence of sympathy. Owing to its astonishing faculty for introjection and effective identification the child suffers with him who suffers, he feels that he must avenge the unfortunate as well as himself, and experiences "vindictive joy" at seeing any sort of pain inflicted upon the author of other people's sufferings.

But it is going a little too far simply to base the sense of justice on such reactions and to speak, as does Mme Antipoff, of "an innate and instinctive moral manifestation which, in order to develop, really requires neither preliminary experience nor socialization amongst other children." In order to prove her thesis, Mme Antipoff lays stress upon the fact that the vindictive tendencies become directly polarized upon the transgressor. "We have here," she concludes, "an inclusive affective perception, an elementary moral 'structure' which the child seems to possess very early and which enables

him to grasp simultaneously evil and its cause, innocence and guilt. We may say that what we have here is an *affective perception of justice*." We may mention at once that nothing in the very interesting observations quoted by Mme Antipoff goes to show this innateness. She deals with observations on the behaviour of children between 3 and 9, and it is obvious that at the age of three, a child has already come under all sorts of adult influences such as can account for the fact that its polarization is now only in terms of good and evil. The proof of this is that the child speaks; it says "serves him right" and "naughty boy," etc. How could it have learned these words without coming under the moral influence of the person who taught them to it, and without accepting at the same time a whole set of explicit or implicit commandments? In a general way, the problem may be stated as follows. How can the vindictive tendencies, even if they are polarized under the influence of compassion, give birth to the need for rewards and punishments and to retributive justice, unless the relations between individuals intervene to "regulate" this polarization, diminishing what is arbitrary and individual in the name of a normative element of either authority or reciprocity?

To our mind, when a child merely avenges some unfortunate for whom he feels immediate compassion, neither the sense of justice nor the idea of punishment is yet at work. All we have is an extension of the vindictive tendency. But even if this sort of disinterested vengeance is a necessary, it is not a sufficient condition for the development of justice, disinterested vengeance will only become a "just" punishment when *rules* come in and make precise the distinction between what is right and what is wrong. So long as there are no rules, revenge, even disinterested revenge, will rest only upon individual sympathy or antipathy and will thus remain arbitrary: the child will not have the feeling of punishing the guilty and defending the innocent, but simply of fighting an enemy and defending a friend. But as soon, on the contrary, as there are rules (and they appear very early—the boy of 3 observed by Mme Antipoff is already saturated with them), as soon as we have rules, we get judgments of guilt and innocence and we get the moral "structure" of retributive justice. Where, then, do these rules come from?

Even if adults never interfered, the social relations subsisting between children would perhaps be sufficient to create them. The play of sympathy and antipathy is a sufficient cause for practical reason to become conscious of reciprocity. And the fact that the law of reciprocity leads to a certain type of punishment has, we believe, been sufficiently established in the preceding analyses. But in that case, the idea of expiation would never arise: mere vengeance would remain a private affair until such time as it would be con-

sidered immoral, and punishment by reciprocity would alone be held to be just.

But the adult intervenes. He imposes commands which give rise to rules that are regarded as sacred. Disinterested vengeance, once it has been "polarized" by these rules, becomes expiatory punishment, and the first type of retributive justice is constituted in this way. When the adult is angry because the laws he has laid down are not observed, this anger is held to be just, because of the unilateral aspect of which older people are the object and because of the sacred character of the law laid down. When adult anger finds vent in chastisement, this vengeance from above appears as a legitimate punishment, and the resultant suffering as a "just" expiation. The idea of expiatory punishment is thus, taken as a whole, due to the conjunction of two influences: the individual influence, which is the desire for vengeance, including derivative and disinterested vengeance, and the social factor, which is adult authority imposing respect for given orders and respect for vengeance in cases where these orders are disobeyed. In a word, expiatory punishment is, from the child's point of view, revenge that may be likened to disinterested revenge (because it avenges the law itself) and that emanates from the authors of the law.

How, then, are we to explain the passage from the first to the second type of retributive justice? If the above remarks are correct, this evolution is nothing but a special case of the general evolution from unilateral to mutual respect. Since in every domain we have studied up till now, respect for the adult—or at any rate a certain way of respecting the adult—diminishes in favour of the relations of equality and reciprocity between children (and so far as is possible, between children and adults), it is perfectly normal that in the domain of retribution the effects of unilateral respect should tend to diminish with age. That is why the idea of expiation loses more and more of its power, and it is why punishments tend more and more to be ruled by the law of reciprocity alone. So that what remains of the idea of retribution is the notion, not that one must compensate for the offence by a proportionate suffering, but that one must make the offender realize, by means of measures appropriate to the fault itself, in what way he has broken the bond of solidarity. The situation can be expressed by saying that distributive justice (the idea of equality) definitely takes precedence over retributive justice, whereas in the beginning the converse was the case. . . . Let us add, finally, that the idea of reciprocity, often taken at first as a sort of legalized vengeance or law of retaliation expressed in quasi-mathematical form, tends of itself towards a morality of forgiveness and understanding. . . .



[The] time comes when the child realizes that there can be reciprocity only in well-doing. We have here a sort of repercussion of the form of the moral law on its content. The law of reciprocity implies certain positive obligations in virtue of its very form. And this is why the child, once he has admitted the principle of punishment by reciprocity in the sphere of justice, often comes to feel that any material punitive element is unnecessary, even if it is "motivated," the essential thing being to make the offender realize that his action was wrong, in so far as it was contrary to the rules of cooperation. . . .

What is at the back of such an evolution? It is obvious that equality will prevail over punishment by reciprocity, since the latter is derived from it. As to expiatory punishment we have nothing new to say on the subject. It is impossible to see how such a notion could have come into being except under the influence of adult constraint. There is nothing in the idea of right and wrong that implies reward or punishment. In other words, it is only because of external associations that the altruistic or egoistic sentiments are bound up with expectation of rewards or punishments. And if this is so, whence can these associations arise if not from the fact that from its tenderest years the child's behaviour is submitted to the sanctions of adults?

But, this being so, how are we to account for the fact that retributive justice, which in all cases of conflict with distributive justice carries the day during the early years, should diminish in importance with the increase of years? It can hardly be maintained that the fear of punishments is less strong at ten than it is at six. On the contrary, from the age of seven to eight onwards school punishments are added to those already incurred in the family, and even if punishments are less frequent at this age than at four or five, they have, on the other hand, a certain gravity which renders them the more apt to impress the youthful mind. So that the feeling of retributive justice ought really to increase with the years, and should be sufficiently strong to hold in check the desire for equality wherever this shows itself. Why is this not so?

Evidently because of the intervention of a new factor. The desire for equality, far from assuming an identical form at every age, seems, on the contrary, to grow more acute as the child's moral development proceeds. Two solutions are conceivable. It may be that equalitarianism, like retributive justice, is the fruit of the child's respect for the adult. Some parents are extremely scrupulous in matters of justice and instil in their children a keen sense of equality. Thus distributive justice may perhaps be merely a second aspect of adult constraint. But it may also be the case that, far from being the direct result of parental or scholastic pressure, the idea of equality de-

velops essentially through children's reactions to each other and sometimes even at the adult's expense. It is very often the injustice one has had to endure that makes one take cognizance of the laws of equality. In any case it is hard to see how such a notion could take on any reality for a child before he had come in contact with his equals either in the home or at school. The relation between child and adult as such does not allow for equality. And since equalitarianism is born of the contact of children with one another, its development must at least keep pace with the progress of cooperation between them. . . .

A law of evolution emerges. . . . True, we cannot speak of stages properly so called, because it is extremely doubtful whether every child passes successively through the four attitudes we have just described. It is greatly a question of the kind of education the child has received. Thus the fourth kind of reaction might appear very early if one were willing to replace the absurd principle of blind obedience ("You've got to do it, and there's an end of it!") by an appeal to cooperation. A little girl of three of our acquaintance used to accept every suggestion from her mother, saying "I'll help you," where her pride would have resisted any sort of constraint. In addition to which, and in order to anticipate the inevitable objection, we repeat what we have said before that results of an interrogatory obviously come later in time than do those of real experience.

With these reservations, however, it seems to us possible to distinguish three broad stages in the development of distributive justice in relation to adult authority. (And we shall see later on that the same holds good of the relations between children.)

During the first stage, justice is not distinguished from the authority of law: "just" is what is commanded by the adult. It is naturally during this first stage that retributive justice, as we saw in the last section, proves stronger than equality. This first stage might therefore be characterized by the absence of the idea of distributive justice, since this notion implies a certain autonomy and a certain degree of liberation from adult authority. But there may well be something rather primitive in the relation of reciprocity, and the germs of equalitarianism may be present from the first in the relations that children have to each other. Only, so long as the respect for the adult predominates, that is to say, throughout the whole of this first stage, these germs could not give rise to any genuine manifestations except in so far as they created no conflict with authority. Thus a child of two or three years old will think it quite right that a cake should be equally divided between him and another child, or that he and a playmate should lend each

other their toys. But if he is told that he must give more to the other child, or keep more for himself, he will promptly turn this into a duty or a right. It is unlikely, on the contrary, that such an attitude should survive for long in a normal child of ten or twelve; the sense of justice here is founded on an autonomous feeling that is superior to any commands that may be received.

During a second stage, equalitarianism grows in strength and comes to outweigh any other consideration. In cases of conflict, therefore, distributive justice is opposed to obedience, to punishment, and very often even to those more subtle reasons that come to the fore in the third period.

Finally, during a third stage, mere equalitarianism makes way for a more subtle conception of justice which we may call "equity," and which consists in never defining equality without taking account of the way in which each individual is situated. In the domain of retributive justice, equity consists in determining what are the attenuating circumstances, and we have seen that this consideration enters very late into children's judgments. In the domain of distributive justice, equity consists in taking account of age, of previous services rendered, etc.; in short, in establishing shades of equality. . . .

Let us now turn to the analysis of [some] cases in which respect for authority enters into conflict with the sense of justice. It may happen not only that the child desires equality with his own kind, but that in some circumstances he claims to be on a level with the adult himself. Mlle Rambert conceived in this connection the happy idea of studying the situation to which the child is so often submitted, namely that of being made to wait at the counter of a shop while the grown-up customers are being served. She asked her subjects: "Is it fair to keep children waiting in shops and to serve the grown-ups first?" The reaction was very definite. Only the very youngest of the subjects hesitated to say so, but the majority even of the six-year-olds maintained with astonishing precocity that each should be served in turn.

Here are two examples showing respect for adult priority.

SAN (6½): "*Little children are not in such a hurry as grown-ups.*"

PAI (7½): "*Whoever comes first is served first.*"—Have children as much right to be served as grown-ups?—"No, because they are smaller and don't quite know how to give an order. Grown-up people have a lot to do and have to hurry." Pai adds that he is looking forward to growing up so as to "*be able to give orders.*"

And a few examples of those who demand exact equality.

MART (9): "*They [the salesmen] ought not to keep children waiting.*"—

Why not?—"Because it's not fair to keep them waiting. Grown-ups should always be served last [= in turn]."—Why?—"Because sometimes little children are just as much in a hurry and it isn't fair [to keep them waiting]."—Should they be served when their turn comes or before the grown-up people?—"When their turn comes."

DEP (9): "It isn't fair. Everyone should be served in turn."

BA (10): "They ought to have served him [the child] when his turn came."—Why?—"Because it isn't fair to serve those who came afterwards."

PRE (10): "Even if he was little he shouldn't have been made to wait. He was shopping just as much as the grown-up people."

It will be seen how definite is the desire for equality in these answers and how vividly they reflect the experiences of real life. . . .

These obviously spontaneous remarks, taken together with the rest of our enquiry, allow us to conclude, in so far as one can talk of stages in the moral life, the existence of three great periods in the development of the sense of justice in the child. One period, lasting up to the age of 7-8, during which justice is subordinated to adult authority; a period contained approximately between 8-11, and which is that of progressive equalitarianism; and finally a period which sets in towards 11-12, and during which purely equalitarian justice is tempered by considerations of equity.

The first is characterized by the non-differentiation of the notions of just and unjust from those of duty and disobedience: whatever conforms to the dictates of the adult authority is just. As a matter of fact even at this stage the child already looks upon some kinds of treatment as unjust, those, namely, in which the adult does not carry out the rules he has himself laid down for children (*e.g.* punishing for a fault that has not been committed, forbidding what has previously been allowed, etc.). But if the adult sticks to his own rules, everything he prescribes is just. In the domain of retributive justice, every punishment is accepted as perfectly legitimate, as necessary, and even as constituting the essence of morality: if lying were not punished, one would be allowed to tell lies, etc. In the stories where we have brought retributive justice into conflict with equality, the child belonging to this stage sets the necessity for punishment above equality of any sort. In the choice of punishments, expiation takes precedence over punishment by reciprocity, the very principle of the latter type of punishment not being exactly understood by the child. In the domain of immanent justice, more than three-quarters of the subjects under 8 believe in an automatic justice which emanates from physical nature and inanimate objects. If obedience and equality are brought into conflict, the child is always in favour of obedience:



authority takes precedence over justice. Finally, in the domain of justice between children, the need for equality is already felt, but it is yielded to only where it cannot possibly come into conflict with authority. For instance, the act of hitting back, which is regarded by the child of 10 as one of elementary justice, is considered "naughty" by the children of 6 and 7, though, of course, they are always doing it in practice. (It will be remembered that the heteronomous rule, whatever may be the respect in which it is held mentally, is not necessarily observed in real life.) On the other hand, even in the relations between children, the authority of older ones will outweigh equality. In short, we may say that throughout this period, during which unilateral respect is stronger than mutual respect, the conception of justice can only develop on certain points, those, namely, where cooperation begins to make itself felt independently of constraint. On all other points, what is just is confused with what is imposed by the adult.

The second period does not appear on the plane of reflection and moral judgment until about the age of 7 or 8. But it is obvious that this comes slightly later than what happens with regard to practice. This period may be defined by the progressive development of autonomy and the priority of equality over authority. In the domain of retributive justice, the idea of expiatory punishment is no longer accepted with the same docility as before, and the only punishments accepted as really legitimate are those based on reciprocity. Belief in immanent justice is perceptibly on the decrease and moral action is sought for its own sake, independently of reward or punishment. In matters of distributive justice, equality rules supreme. In conflicts between punishment and equality, equality outweighs every other consideration. The same holds good *a fortiori* of conflicts with authority. Finally, in the relations between children, equalitarianism obtains progressively with increasing age.

Towards 11-12 we see a new attitude emerge, which may be said to be characterized by the feeling of equity, and which is nothing but a development of equalitarianism in the direction of relativity. Instead of looking for equality in identity, the child no longer thinks of the equal rights of individuals except in relation to the particular situation of each. In the domain of retributive justice this comes to the same thing as not applying the same punishment to all, but taking into account the attenuating circumstances of some. In the domain of distributive justice it means no longer thinking of a law as identical for all but taking account of the personal circumstances of each (favouring the younger ones, etc.). Far from leading to privileges, such an attitude tends to make equality more effectual than it was before.

Even if this evolution does not consist of general stages, but simply of phases characterizing certain limited processes, we have said enough to try to elucidate now the psychological origins of the idea of justice and the conditions of its development. With this in view, let us distinguish retributive from distributive justice, for the two go together only when reduced to their fundamental elements, and let us begin with distributive judgment, whose fate in the course of mental development seems to indicate that it is the most fundamental form of justice itself.

Distributive justice can be reduced to the ideas of equality or equity. . . . From this point of view it cannot be denied that the idea of equality or of distributive justice possesses individual or biological roots which are necessary but not sufficient conditions for its development. One can observe in the child at a very early stage two reactions which will play a very important part in this particular elaboration. Jealousy, to begin with, appears extremely early in babies: infants of 8 to 12 months often give signs of violent rage when they see another child seated on their mother's knees, or when a toy is taken from them and given to another child. On the other hand, one can observe in conjunction with imitation and the ensuing sympathy, altruistic reactions and a tendency to share, which are of equally early date. An infant of 12 months will hand his toys over to another child, and so on. But it goes without saying that equalitarianism can never be regarded as a sort of instinct or spontaneous product of the individual mind. The reactions we have just alluded to lead to a capricious alternation of egoism and sympathy. It is true, of course, that jealousy prevents other people from taking advantage of us, and the need to communicate prevents the self from taking advantage of others. But for true equality and a genuine desire for reciprocity there must be a collective rule which is the *sui generis* product of life lived in common. There must be born of the actions and reactions of individuals upon each other the consciousness of a necessary equilibrium binding upon and limiting both "alter" and "ego." And this ideal equilibrium, dimly felt on the occasion of every quarrel and every peace-making, naturally presupposes a long reciprocal education of the children by each other.

But between the primitive individual reactions, which give the need for justice a chance of showing itself, and the full possession of the idea of equality, our enquiry shows the existence of a long interval in time. For it is not until about 10-12, at the age where, as we saw elsewhere, children's societies attain to the maximum of organization and codification of rules, that justice really frees herself from all her adventitious trappings. Here, as

before, we must therefore distinguish constraint from cooperation, and our problem will then be to determine whether it is unilateral respect, the source of constraint, or mutual respect, the source of cooperation, that is the preponderating factor in the evolution of equalitarian justice.

Now on this point the results of our analysis seem to leave no room for doubt. Authority as such cannot be the source of justice, because the development of justice presupposes autonomy. This does not mean, of course, that the adult plays no part in the development of justice, even of the distributive kind. In so far as he practises reciprocity with the child and preaches by example rather than by precept, he exercises here, as always, an enormous influence. But the most direct effect of adult ascendancy is, as M. Bovet has shown, the feeling of duty, and there is a sort of contradiction between the submission demanded by duty and the complete autonomy required by the development of justice. For, resting as it does on equality and reciprocity, justice can only come into being by free consent. Adult authority, even if it acts in conformity with justice, has therefore the effect of weakening what constitutes the essence of justice. Hence those reactions which we observed among the smaller children, who confused what was just with what was law, law being whatever is prescribed by adult authority. Justice is identified with formulated rules—as indeed it is in the opinion of a great many adults, of all, namely, who have not succeeded in setting autonomy of conscience above social prejudice and the written law.

Thus adult authority, although perhaps it constitutes a necessary moment in the moral evolution of the child, is not in itself sufficient to create a sense of justice. This can develop only through the progress made by cooperation and mutual respect—cooperation between children to begin with, and then between child and adult as the child approaches adolescence and comes, secretly at least, to consider himself as the adult's equal.

In support of these hypotheses, one is struck by the extent to which, in child as well as in adult society, the progress of equalitarianism goes hand in hand with that of "organic" solidarity, *i.e.* with the results of cooperation. For if we compare the societies formed by children of 5-7 with those formed at the age of 10-12, we can observe four interdependent transformations. In the first place, while the little ones' society constitutes an amorphous and unorganized whole, in which all the individuals are alike, that of the older children achieves an organic unity, with laws and regulations, and often even a division of social work (leaders, referees, etc.). In the second place, there exists between the older children a far stronger moral solidarity than among

the younger ones. The little ones are simultaneously egocentric and impersonal, yielding to every suggestion that comes along and to every current of imitation. In their case the group feeling is a sort of communion of submission to seniors and to the dictates of adults. Older children, on the contrary, ban lies among themselves, cheating and everything that compromises solidarity. The group feeling is therefore more direct and more consciously cultivated. In the third place, personality develops in the measure that discussion and the interchange of ideas replace the simple mutual imitation of the younger children. In the fourth place, the sense of equality is, as we have just seen, far stronger in the older than in the younger children, the latter being primarily under the domination of authority. Thus the bond between equalitarianism and solidarity is a universal psychological phenomenon, and not, as might appear to be the case in adult society, dependent only upon political factors. With children as with adults, there exist two psychological types of social equilibrium—a type based on the constraint of age, which excludes both equality and “organic” solidarity, but which canalizes individual egocentrism without excluding it, and a type based on cooperation and resting on equality and solidarity.

Let us pass on to retributive justice. In contrast to the principles of distributive justice, there does not seem to be in the ideas of retribution or punishment any properly rational . . . element. For while the idea of equality gains in value as intellectual development proceeds, the idea of punishment seems actually to lose ground. To put things more precisely, we must, as we have already done, distinguish two separate elements in the idea of retribution. On the one hand there are the notions of expiation and reward, which seems to constitute what is most specific about the idea of punishment, and on the other, there are the ideas of “putting things right” or making reparation, as well as the measures which aim at restoring the bond of solidarity broken by the offending act. These last ideas, which we have grouped under the title of “punishment by reciprocity,” seem to draw only on the conceptions of equality and reciprocity. It is the former set of ideas that tends to be eliminated when the morality of heteronomy and authority is superseded by the morality of autonomy. The second set are of far more enduring stuff, precisely because they are based upon something more than the idea of punishment.

Whatever may be said of this evolution of values, it is possible here, as in connection with distributive justice, to assign three sources to the three chief aspects of retribution. . . . [Certain] individual reactions condition the ap-



pearance of retribution; adult constraint explains the formation of the idea of expiation, and cooperation accounts for the eventual fate of the idea of punishment.

It cannot be denied that the idea of punishment has psycho-biological roots. Blow calls for blow and gentleness moves us to gentleness. The instinctive reactions of defence and sympathy thus bring about a sort of elementary reciprocity which is the soil that retribution demands for its growth. But this soil is naturally not enough in itself, and the individual factors cannot of themselves transcend the stage of impulsive vengeance without finding themselves subject—at least implicitly—to the system of regulated and codified sanctions implied in retributive justice.

Things change, with the intervention of the adult. Very early in life, even before the infant can speak, its conduct is constantly being subjected to approval or censure. According to circumstances people are pleased with baby and smile at it, or else frown and leave it to cry, and the very inflections in the voices of those that surround it are alone sufficient to constitute an incessant retribution. During the years that follow, the child is watched over continuously, everything he does and says is controlled, gives rise to encouragement or reproof, and the vast majority of adults still look upon punishment, corporal or otherwise, as perfectly legitimate. It is obviously these reactions on the part of the adult, due generally to fatigue or impatience, but often, too, coldly thought out on his part, it is obviously these adult reactions, we repeat, that are the psychological starting-point of the idea of expiatory punishment. If the child felt nothing but fear or mistrust, as may happen in extreme cases, this would simply lead to open war. But as the child loves his parents and feels [respect] for their actions . . . punishment appears to him as morally obligatory and necessarily connected with the act that provoked it. Disobedience—the principle of all “sin”—is a breach of the normal relations between parent and child; some reparation is therefore necessary, and since parents display their “righteous anger” by the various reactions that take the form of punishments, to accept these punishments constitutes the most natural form of reparation. The pain inflicted thus seems to re-establish the relations that had momentarily been interrupted, and in this way the idea of expiation becomes incorporated in the values of the morality of authority. In our view, therefore, this “primitive” and materialistic conception of expiatory punishment is not imposed as such by the adult upon the child, and it was perhaps never invented by a psychologically adult mind; but it is the inevitable product of punishment as refracted in the mystically realistic mentality of the child.

If, then, there is such close solidarity between the idea of punishment and unilateral respect *plus* the morality of authority, it follows that all progress in cooperation and mutual respect will be such as to gradually eliminate the idea of expiation from the idea of punishment, and to reduce the latter to a simple act of reparation, or a simple measure of reciprocity. And this is actually what we believe we have observed in the child. As respect for adult punishment gradually grows less, certain types of conduct develop which one cannot but class under the heading of retributive justice. . . . [The] child feels more and more that it is fair that he should defend himself and to give back the blows he receives. This is retribution without doubt, but the idea of expiation seems not to play the slightest part in these judgments. It is entirely a matter of reciprocity. So-and-so takes upon himself the right to give me a punch, he therefore gives me the right to do the same to him. Similarly, the cheat gains a certain advantage by the fact of cheating; it is therefore legitimate to restore equality by turning him out of the game or by taking back the marbles he has won.

It may be objected that such a morality will not take one very far, since the best adult consciences ask for something more than the practice of mere reciprocity. Charity and the forgiving of injuries done to one are, in the eyes of many, far greater things than sheer equality. In this connection, moralists have often laid stress on the conflict between justice and love, since justice often prescribes what is reprov'd by love and *vice versa*. But in our view, it is precisely this concern with reciprocity which leads one beyond the rather short-sighted justice of those children who give back the mathematical equivalent of the blows they have received. Like all spiritual realities which are the result, not of external constraint but of autonomous development, reciprocity has two aspects: reciprocity as a fact, and reciprocity as an ideal, as something which ought to be. The child begins by simply practising reciprocity, in itself not so easy a thing as one might think. Then, once he has grown accustomed to this form of equilibrium in his actions, his behaviour is altered from within, its form reacting, as it were, upon its content. What is regarded as just is no longer merely reciprocal action, but primarily behaviour that admits of indefinitely sustained reciprocity. The motto "Do as you would be done by," thus comes to replace the conception of crude equality. The child sets forgiveness above revenge, not out of weakness, but because "there is no end" to revenge (a boy of 10). Just as in logic, we can see a sort of reaction of the form of the proposition upon its content when the principle of contradiction leads to a simplification and purification of the initial definitions, so in ethics, reciprocity implies a purification of the deeper

trend of conduct, guiding it by gradual stages to universality itself. Without leaving the sphere of reciprocity, generosity—the characteristic of our third stage—allies itself to justice pure and simple, and between the more refined forms of justice, such as equity and love properly so called, there is no longer any real conflict.

In conclusion, then, we find in the domain of justice . . . that opposition of two moralities to which we have so often drawn the reader's attention. The ethics of authority, which is that of duty and obedience, leads, in the domain of justice, to the confusion of what is just with the content of established law and to the acceptance of expiatory punishment. The ethics of mutual respect, which is that of good (as opposed to duty), and of autonomy, leads, in the domain of justice, to the development of equality, which is the idea at the bottom of distributive justice and of reciprocity. Solidarity between equals appears once more as the source of a whole set of complementary and coherent moral ideas which characterize the rational mentality. The question may, of course, be raised whether such realities could ever develop without a preliminary stage, during which the child's conscience is moulded by his unilateral respect for the adult. As this cannot be put to the test by experiment, it is idle to argue the point. But what is certain is that the moral equilibrium achieved by the complementary conceptions of heteronomous duty and of punishment properly so called, is an unstable equilibrium, owing to the fact that it does not allow the personality to grow and expand to its full extent. As the child grows up, the subjection of his conscience to the mind of the adult seems to him less legitimate, and except in cases of arrested moral development, caused either by decisive inner submission (those adults who remain children all their lives), or by sustained revolt, unilateral respect tends of itself to grow into mutual respect and to the state of cooperation which constitutes the normal equilibrium. It is obvious that since in our modern societies the common morality which regulates the relations of adults to each other is that of cooperation, the development of child morality will be accelerated by the examples that surround it. Actually, however, this is more probably a phenomenon of convergence than one simply of social pressure. For if human societies have evolved from heteronomy to autonomy, and from gerontocratic theocracy in all its forms to equalitarian democracy, it may very well be that the phenomena of social condensation so well described by Durkheim have been favourable primarily to the emancipation of one generation from another, and have thus rendered possible in children and adolescents the development we have outlined above. . . .

CHAPTER V: THE TWO MORALITIES OF THE CHILD AND  
TYPES OF SOCIAL RELATIONS

The analysis of the child's moral judgments has led us perforce to the discussion of the great problem of the relations of social life to the rational consciousness. The conclusion we came to was that the morality prescribed for the individual by society is not homogeneous because society itself is not just one thing. Society is the sum of social relations, and among these relations we can distinguish two extreme types: relations of constraint, whose characteristic is to impose upon the individual from outside a system of rules with obligatory content, and relations of cooperation whose characteristic is to create within people's minds the consciousness of ideal norms at the back of all rules. Arising from the ties of authority and unilateral respect, the relations of constraint therefore characterize most of the features of society as it exists, and in particular the relations of the child to its adult surrounding. Defined by equality and mutual respect, the relations of cooperation, on the contrary, constitute an equilibrial limit rather than a static system. Constraint, the source of duty and heteronomy, cannot, therefore, be reduced to the good and to autonomous rationality, which are the fruits of reciprocity, although the actual evolution of the relations of constraint tends to bring these nearer to cooperation. . . .

This . . . brings us to a second point: the parallelism existing between moral and intellectual development. Everyone is aware of the kinship between logical and ethical norms. Logic is the morality of thought just as morality is the logic of action. Nearly all contemporary theories agree in recognizing the existence of this parallelism—from the *a priori* view which regards pure reason as the arbiter both of theoretical reflection and daily practice, to the sociological theories of knowledge and of ethical values. It is therefore in no way surprising that the analysis of child thought should bring to the fore certain particular aspects of this general phenomenon.

One may say, to begin with, that in a certain sense neither logical nor moral norms are innate in the individual mind. We can find, no doubt, even before language, all the elements of rationality and morality. Thus sensorimotor intelligence gives rise to operations of assimilation and construction, in which it is not hard to see the functional equivalent of the logic of classes and of relations. Similarly the child's behaviour towards persons shows signs from the first of those sympathetic tendencies and affective reactions in which one can easily see the raw material of all subsequent moral behaviour. But an intelligent act can only be called logical and a good-hearted impulse



moral from the moment that certain norms impress a given structure and rules of equilibrium upon this material. Logic is not co-extensive with intelligence, but consists of the sum-total of rules of control which intelligence makes use of for its own direction. Morality plays a similar part with regard to the affective life. Now there is nothing that allows us to affirm the existence of such norms in the pre-social behaviour occurring before the appearance of language. The control characteristic of sensori-motor intelligence is of external origin: it is things themselves that constrain the organism to select which steps it will take; the initial intellectual activity does actively seek for truth. Similarly, it is persons external to him who canalize the child's elementary feelings, those feelings do not tend to regulate themselves from within. . . .

[A] coming into consciousness or conscious realization [on the part of the child] is not a simple operation and is bound up with a whole set of psychological conditions. It is here that psycho-sociological research becomes indispensable to the theory of norms and that the genetic parallelism existing between the formation of the logical and of the moral consciousness can be observed.

In the first place it should be noticed that the individual is not capable of achieving this conscious realization by himself, and consequently does not straight way succeed in establishing norms properly so-called. It is in this sense that reason in its double aspect, both logical and moral, is a collective product. This does not mean that society has conjured up rationality out of the void, nor that there does not exist a spirit of humanity that is superior to society because dwelling both within the individual and the social group. It means that social life is necessary if the individual is to become conscious of the functioning of his own mind and thus to transform into norms properly so-called the simple functional equilibria immanent to all mental and even all vital activity.

For the individual, left to himself, remains egocentric. By which we mean simply this—Just as at first the mind, before it can dissociate what belongs to objective laws from what is bound up with the sum of subjective conditions, confuses itself with the universe, so does the individual begin by understanding and feeling everything through the medium of himself before distinguishing what belongs to things and other people from what is the result of his own particular intellectual and affective perspective. At this stage, therefore, the individual cannot be conscious of his own thought, since consciousness of self implies a perpetual comparison of the self with

other people. Thus from the logical point of view egocentrism would seem to involve a sort of alogicality, such that sometimes affectivity gains the ascendant over objectivity, and sometimes the relations arising from personal activity prove stronger than the relations that are independent of the self. And from the moral point of view, egocentrism involves a sort of *anomy* such that tenderness and disinterestedness can go hand in hand with a naïve selfishness, and yet the child not feel spontaneously himself to be better in one case than the other. Just as the ideas which enter his mind appear from the first in the form of beliefs and not of hypotheses requiring verification, so do the feelings that arise in the child's consciousness appear to him from the first as having value and not as having to be submitted to some ulterior evaluation. It is only through contact with the judgments and evaluations of others that this intellectual and affective *anomy* will gradually yield to the pressure of collective logical and moral laws.

In the second place, the relations of constraint and unilateral respect which are spontaneously established between child and adult contribute to the formation of a first type of logical and moral control. But this control is insufficient of itself to eliminate childish egocentrism. From the intellectual point of view this respect of the child for the adult gives rise to an "annunciatory" conception of truth: the mind stops affirming what it likes to affirm and falls in with the opinion of those around it. This gives birth to a distinction which is equivalent to that of truth and falsehood: some affirmations are recognized as valid while others are not. But it goes without saying that although this distinction marks an important advance as compared to the *anomy* of egocentric thought, it is none the less irrational in principle. For if we are to speak of truth as rational, it is not sufficient that the contents of one's statements should conform with reality: reason must have taken active steps to obtain these contents and reason must be in a position to control the agreement or disagreement of these statements with reality. Now, in the case under discussion, reason is still very far removed from this autonomy: truth means whatever conforms with the spoken word of the adult. Whether the child has himself discovered the propositions which he asks the adult to sanction with his authority, or whether he merely repeats what the adult has said, in both cases there is intellectual constraint put upon an inferior by a superior, and therefore heteronomy. Thus, far from checking childish egocentrism at its source, such a submission tends on the contrary partly to consolidate the mental habits characteristic of egocentrism. Just as, if left to himself, the child believes every idea that enters his head instead of regarding it as a hypothesis to be verified, so the child who is submissive to

the word of his parents believes without question everything he is told, instead of perceiving the element of uncertainty and search in adult thought. The self's good pleasure is simply replaced by the good pleasure of a supreme authority. There is progress here, no doubt, since such a transference accustoms the mind to look for a common truth, but this progress is big with danger if the supreme authority be not in its turn criticized in the name of reason. Now, criticism is born of discussion, and discussion is only possible among equals: cooperation alone will therefore accomplish what intellectual constraint failed to bring about. And indeed we constantly have occasion throughout our schools to notice the combined effects of this constraint and of intellectual egocentrism. What is "verbalism," for example, if not the joint result of oral authority and the syncretism peculiar to the egocentric language of the child? In short, in order to really socialize the child, cooperation is necessary, for it alone will succeed in delivering him from the mystical power of the word of the adult.

An exact counterpart of these findings about intellectual constraint is supplied by the observations on the effect of moral constraint. . . . Just as the child believes in the adult's omniscience so also does he unquestioningly believe in the absolute value of the imperatives he receives. This result of unilateral respect is of great practical value, for it is in this way that there is formed an elementary sense of duty and the first normative control of which the child is capable. But it seemed to us clear that this acquisition was not sufficient to form true morality. For conduct to be characterized as moral there must be something more than an outward agreement between its content and that of the commonly accepted rules: it is also requisite that the mind should tend towards morality as to an autonomous good and should itself be capable of appreciating the value of the rules that are proposed to it. Now in the case under discussion, the good is simply what is in conformity with heteronomous commands. And as in the case of intellectual development, moral constraint has the effect of partly consolidating the habits characteristic of egocentrism. Even when the child's behaviour is not just a calculated attempt to reconcile his individual interest with the letter of the law, one can observe (as we had occasion to do in the game of marbles) a curious mixture of respect for the law and of caprice in its application. The law is still external to the mind, which cannot therefore be transformed by it. Besides, since he regards the adult as the source of the law, the child is only raising up the will of the adult to the rank of the supreme good after having previously accorded this rank to the various dictates of his own desires. An advance, no doubt, but again an advance charged with doubtful

consequences if cooperation does not come and establish norms sufficiently independent to subject even the respect due to the adult to this inner ideal. And indeed so long as unilateral respect is alone at work, we see a "moral realism" developing which is the equivalent of "verbal realism." Resting in part on the externality of rules, such a realism is also kept going by all the other forms of realism peculiar to the egocentric mentality of the child. Only cooperation will correct this attitude, thus showing that in the moral sphere, as in matters of intelligence, it plays a liberating and a constructive rôle.

Hence a third analogy between moral and intellectual evolution: cooperation alone leads to autonomy. With regard to logic, cooperation is at first a source of criticism; thanks to the mutual control which it introduces, it suppresses both the spontaneous conviction that characterizes egocentrism and the blind faith in adult authority. Thus, discussion gives rise to reflection and objective verification. But through this very fact cooperation becomes the source of constructive values. It leads to the recognition of the principles of formal logic in so far as these normative laws are necessary to common search for truth. It leads, above all, to a conscious realization of the logic of relations, since reciprocity on the intellectual plane necessarily involves the elaboration of those laws of perspective which we find in the operations distinctive of systems of relations.

In the same way, with regard to moral realities, cooperation is at first the source of criticism and individualism. For by comparing his own private motives with the rules adopted by each and sundry, the individual is led to judge objectively the acts and commands of other people, including adults. Whence the decline of unilateral respect and the primacy of personal judgment. But in consequence of this, cooperation suppresses both egocentrism and moral realism, and thus achieves an interiorization of rules. A new morality follows upon that of pure duty. Heteronomy steps aside to make way for a consciousness of good, of which the autonomy results from the acceptance of the norms of reciprocity. Obedience withdraws in favour of the idea of justice and of mutual service, now the source of all the obligations which till then had been imposed as incomprehensible commands. In a word, cooperation on the moral plane brings about transformations exactly parallel to those of which we have just been recalling the existence in the intellectual domain. . . .





THE ANATOMY OF SOCIETY:  
COMMUNITY AND POLITY

I. CONCEPTS OF COMMUNITY



## ÉMILE DURKHEIM

THE THEME of individualism in matters social, economic, and political has been in the foreground of the history of Western civilization. And each phase of its development has been accompanied with interpretations and rationales of its place in society. With the advent of economic liberalism, the principle of *laissez faire* was thought by some to be not only descriptive of a state of affairs but prescriptive as a course of action for the perpetuation of social well-being. John Stuart Mill (1806–1873) and Herbert Spencer (1820–1903), in their respective ways, regarded the *raison d'être* for social progress to be in the liberation of human effort and action. Thus the pursuit of individual interests for the satisfaction of human needs was seen as the basis for social order and human cooperation.

Durkheim's first major work, *The Division of Labor in Society*, was designed to refute this thesis by way of revealing his own perspective and system of thought. Durkheim insisted that the fact of human association was a logical prerequisite for, and not a by-product of, individual free action. He regarded these analyses into the discrete actions of individuals as neglecting the framework of *society*, with its implicit moral rules and norms (*collective conscience*) for all men, within which the realization of freedom takes on significance. Without such a regulative context (*mechanical solidarity*) human action would be chaotic and violent, rather than orderly and cooperative.

However, Durkheim, like Adam Smith (1723–1790), was not unaware of the fact that the decisive factor in the shaping of modern society was the differentiation of human effort. For Durkheim the division of labor not only was dependent upon the *mechanical solidarity* of the social milieu, but it also created new modes of human association (*organic solidarity*). Therefore, the issues of progress and conflict in society are for Durkheim not faithfully represented as simply the relations between the individual as free agent and the state as a deterrent to human freedom. Social and human achievement entails a consideration of man's various communal obligations. Since man is a social animal the locus of his development lies within the range of his plural associations.

The following selection is from *The Division of Labor in Society* (1893). The translation from the original French is by George Simpson.





## THE DIVISION OF LABOR IN SOCIETY

### *Introduction: The Problem*

The division of labor is not of recent origin, but it was only at the end of the eighteenth century that social cognizance was taken of the principle, though, until then, unwitting submission had been rendered to it. To be sure, several thinkers from earliest times saw its importance; but Adam Smith was the first to attempt a theory of it. Moreover, he adopted this phrase that social science later lent to biology.

Nowadays, the phenomenon has developed so generally it is obvious to all. We need have no further illusions about the tendencies of modern industry; it advances steadily towards powerful machines, towards great concentrations of forces and capital, and consequently to the extreme division of labor. Occupations are infinitely separated and specialized, not only inside the factories, but each product is itself a specialty dependent upon others. Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill still hoped that agriculture, at least, would be an exception to the rule, and they saw it as the last resort of small-scale industry. Although one must be careful not to generalize unduly in such matters, nevertheless it is hard to deny today that the principal branches of the agricultural industry are steadily being drawn into the general movement. Finally, business itself is ingeniously following and reflecting in all its shadings the infinite diversity of industrial enterprises; and, while this evolution is realizing itself with unpremeditated spontaneity, the economists, examining its causes and appreciating its results, far from condemning or opposing it, uphold it as necessary. They see in it the supreme law of human societies and the condition of their progress.

But the division of labor is not peculiar to the economic world; we can observe its growing influence in the most varied fields of society. The political, administrative, and judicial functions are growing more and more specialized. It is the same with the aesthetic and scientific functions. It is long since philosophy reigned as the science unique; it has been broken into a multitude of special disciplines each of which has its object, method, and thought. "Men working in the sciences have become increasingly more specialized."

---

The following selection has been reprinted from Émile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society* (pp. 39-41, 50-54, 61-63, 64-66, 68-73, 79-82, 105-107, 109-117, 119-122, 129-131, 226-229, 405-409, Macmillan Co., New York, 1933).

Before revealing the nature of the studies with which the most illustrious scholars have concerned themselves for two centuries, de Candolle observed that at the time of Leibnitz and Newton, it would have been necessary to write "almost always, two or three titles for each scholar; for instance, astronomer and physician, or mathematician, astronomer, and physician, or else to employ only general terms like philosopher or naturalist. Even that would not be enough. The mathematicians and naturalists were sometimes literary men or poets. Even at the end of the eighteenth century, these multiple titles would have been necessary to indicate exactly what such men as Wolff, Haller, Charles Bonnet had done in several categories of the arts and sciences. In the nineteenth century, this difficulty no longer exists, or at least is very rare." Not only has the scholar ceased to take up different sciences simultaneously, but he does not even cover a single science completely any more. The ambit of his researches is restricted to a determined order of problems or even to a single problem. At the same time, the scientific function, formerly always allied with something more lucrative, like that of physician, priest, magistrate, soldier, has become more and more sufficient unto itself. De Candolle even foresees a day when the professions of scholar and teacher, still so intimately united, will finally separate.

The recent speculation in the philosophy of biology has ended by making us see in the division of labor a fact of a very general nature, which the economists, who first proposed it, never suspected. It is general knowledge since the works of Wolff, Von Baer, and Milne-Edwards, that the law of the division of labor applies to organisms as to societies; it can even be said that the more specialized the functions of the organism, the greater its development. This discovery has had the effect of immeasurably extending the scope of the division of labor, placing its origins in an infinitely distant past, since it becomes almost contemporaneous with the coming of life into the world. It is no longer considered only a social institution that has its source in the intelligence and will of men, but is a phenomenon of general biology whose conditions must be sought in the essential properties of organized matter. The division of labor in society appears to be no more than a particular form of this general process; and societies, in conforming to that law, seem to be yielding to a movement that was born before them, and that similarly governs the entire world.

Such a fact evidently cannot be produced without profoundly affecting our moral constitution; for the development of man will be conceived in two entirely different ways, depending on whether we yield to the movement or resist it. At this point, an urgent question arises: Of these two

directions, which must we choose? Is it our duty to seek to become a thorough and complete human being, one quite sufficient unto oneself; or, on the contrary, to be only a part of a whole, the organ of an organism? Briefly, is the division of labor, at the same time that it is a law of nature, also a moral rule of human conduct; and, if it has this latter character, why and in what degree? It is not necessary to show the gravity of this practical problem; for, whatever opinion one has about the division of labor, everyone knows that it exists, and is more and more becoming one of the fundamental bases of the social order. . . .

### *Book I: The Function of the Division of Labor*

#### CHAPTER I: THE METHOD FOR DETERMINING THIS FUNCTION

. . . Nothing seems easier to determine, at first glance, than the role of the division of labor. Are not its effects universally recognized? Since it combines both the productive power and the ability of the workman, it is the necessary condition of development in societies, both intellectual and material development. It is the source of civilization. Besides, since we quite facilely assign an absolute value to civilization, we do not bethink ourselves to seek any other function for the division of labor.

Though it may truly have this effect, there would be in that nothing to amplify through discussion. But if it had no other, and did not serve any other purpose, there would be no reason to assign it a moral character.

In short, the services that it renders are very near to being foreign to the moral life, or at least have only indirect and remote relation to it. Although it may be common enough today to reply to the polemic of Rousseau with dithyrambs of opposite meaning, nevertheless there is no proof at all that civilization is a moral fact. To meet the problem, we cannot refer to concepts which are necessarily subjective; rather it would be necessary to employ a standard by which to measure the level of average morality, and to observe, thus, how it varies in proportion to the progress of civilization. Unfortunately, this standard of measurement is not forthcoming, but we do possess one for collective immorality. The average number of suicides, of crimes of all sorts, can effectively serve to mark the intensity of immorality in a given society. If we make this experiment, it does not turn out creditably for civilization, for the number of these morbid phenomena seems to increase as the arts, sciences, and industry progress. Doubtless, there would be some inadvertence in concluding from this fact that civilization is immoral, but one

can at least be certain that, if it has a positive and favorable influence on the moral life, it is quite weak.

But, if we analyze this badly defined complex called civilization, we find that the elements of which it is composed are bereft of any moral character whatever.

It is particularly true of the economic activity which always accompanies civilization. Far from serving moral progress, it is in the great industrial centers that crimes and suicides are most numerous. In any event, it evidently does not present the external indices by which we recognize moral facts. We have replaced stage coaches by railroads, sailboats by transatlantic liners, small shops by manufacturing plants. All this changed activity is generally considered useful, but it contains nothing morally binding. The artisan and the private *entrepreneur* who resist this general current and obstinately pursue their modest enterprises do their duty quite as well as the great manufacturer who covers a country with machines and places a whole army of workers under his command. The moral conscience of nations is in this respect correct; it prefers a little justice to all the industrial perfection in the world. No doubt industrial activities have a reason for existing. They respond to needs, but these needs are not moral.

The case is even stronger with art, which is absolutely refractory to all that resembles an obligation, for it is the domain of liberty. It is a luxury and an acquirement which it is perhaps lovely to possess, but which is not obligatory; what is superfluous does not impose itself. On the other hand, morality is the least indispensable, the strictly necessary, the daily bread without which societies cannot exist. Art responds to our need of pursuing an activity without end, for the pleasure of the pursuit, whereas morality compels us to follow a determinate path to a definite end. Whatever is obligatory is at the same time constraining. Thus, although art may be animated by moral ideas or find itself involved in the evolution of phenomena which, properly speaking, are moral, it is not in itself moral. It might even be contended that in the case of individuals, as in societies, an intemperant development of the aesthetic faculties is a serious sign from a moral point of view.

Of all the elements of civilization, science is the only one which, under certain conditions, presents a moral character. That is, societies are tending more and more to look upon it as a duty for the individual to develop his intelligence by learning the scientific truths which have been established. At present, there are a certain number of propositions which we must all understand. We are not forced to inject ourselves into the industrial mêlée;



we do not have to be artists, but every one is now forced not to be ignorant. This obligation is, indeed, so strongly intrenched that, in certain societies, it is sanctioned not only by public opinion, but also by law. It is, moreover, not difficult to understand whence comes this special status accorded to science. Science is nothing else than conscience carried to its highest point of clarity. Thus, in order for society to live under existent conditions, the field of conscience, individual as well as social, must be extended and clarified. That is, as the environments in which they exist become more and more complex, and, consequently, more and more changeable, to endure, they must change often. On the other hand, the more obscure conscience is, the more refractory to change it is, because it does not perceive quickly enough the necessity for changing nor in what sense it must change. On the contrary, an enlightened conscience prepares itself in advance for adaptation. That is why intelligence guided by science must take a larger part in the course of collective life.

But the science which everybody is thus required to possess does not merit the name at all. It is not science; it is at most the common part and the most general. It is reduced, really, to a small number of indispensable propositions which are necessary for all to have only because they are within reach of everybody. Science, properly considered, is far above this common modicum. It does not encompass only what it is shameful not to know, but everything that it is possible to know. It does not ask of those who cultivate it only ordinary faculties that every man possesses, but special qualifications. Accordingly, being available only to an elite, it is not obligatory; it is a useful and a good thing, but it is not imperatively necessary for society to avail itself of it. It is advantageous to have; there is nothing immoral in not having acquired it. It is a field of action which is open to the initiative of all, but where none is forced to enter. We do not have to be scholars any more than we have to be artists. Science is, then, as art and industry, outside the moral sphere.

So many controversies have taken place concerning the moral character of civilization because very often moralists have no objective criterion to distinguish moral facts from those not moral. We fall into the habit of qualifying as moral everything that has a certain nobility and some value, everything that is an object of elevated aspirations, and it is because of this over-extension of the term that we have considered civilization as moral. But the domain of ethics is not so nebulous; it consists of all the rules of action which are imperatively imposed upon conduct, to which a sanction is attached, but no more. Consequently, since there is nothing in civilization

which presents this moral criterion, civilization is morally indifferent. If, then, the division of labor had no other role than to render civilization possible, it would participate in the same moral neutrality.

It is because they have not seen any further function of the division of labor that the theories that have been proposed are inconsistent on this point. In short, though there exist a zone neutral to morals, the division of labor cannot be part of it. If it is not good, it is bad; if it is not moral, it is immoral. If, then, it has no other use, one falls into unresolvable antinomies, for the greater economies that it offers are offset by moral inconveniences, and since it is impossible to separate these two heterogeneous and incomparable quantities, we could not decide which prevailed over the other, nor, consequently, take a position on the matter. We would invoke the primacy of morality as a sweeping condemnation of the division of labor. However, this *ultima ratio* is arrived at through a scientific *coup d'état*, and the evident necessity for specialization makes such a position untenable.

Moreover, if the division of labor does not fill any other role, not only does it not have a moral character, but it is difficult to see what reason for existence it can have. We shall see that, taken by itself, civilization has no intrinsic and absolute value; what makes it valuable is its correspondence to certain needs. But the proposition will be demonstrated later that these needs are themselves results of the division of labor. Because the latter does not go forward without a demand for greater expenditure of energy, man is led to seek, as compensation, certain goods from civilization which, otherwise, would not interest him in the least. If, however, the division of labor replied to no other needs than these, it would have no other function than to diminish the effects which it produces itself, or to heal the wounds which it inflicts. Under these conditions, we would have to endure it, but there would be no reason for desiring it since the services it would render would reduce its function to replenishing the losses that it caused.

All this leads us to seek some other function for the division of labor. . . .

. . . The social relations to which the division of labor gives birth have often been considered only in terms of exchange, but this misinterprets what such exchange implies and what results from it. It suggests two beings mutually dependent because they are each incomplete, and translates this mutual dependence outwardly. It is, then, only the superficial expression of an internal and very deep state. Precisely because this state is constant, it calls up a whole mechanism of images which function with a continuity that exchange does not possess. The image of the one who completes us

becomes inseparable from ours, not only because it is frequently associated with ours, but particularly because it is the natural complement of it. It thus becomes an integral and permanent part of our conscience, to such a point that we can no longer separate ourselves from it and seek to increase its force. That is why we enjoy the society of the one it represents, since the presence of the object that it expresses, by making us actually perceive it, sets it off more. On the other hand, we will suffer from all circumstances which, like absence or death, may have as effect the barring of its return or the diminishing of its vivacity.

As short as this analysis is, it suffices to show that this mechanism is not identical with that which serves as a basis for sentiments of sympathy whose source is resemblance. Surely there can be no solidarity between others and us unless the image of others unites itself with ours. But when the union results from the resemblance of two images, it consists in an agglutination. The two representations become solidary because, being indistinct, totally or in part, they confound each other, and become no more than one, and they are solidary only in the measure which they confound themselves. On the contrary, in the case of the division of labor, they are outside each other and are linked only because they are distinct. Neither the sentiments nor the social relations which derive from these sentiments are the same in the two cases.

We are thus led to ask if the division of labor would not play the same role in more extensive groups, if, in contemporary societies where it has developed as we know, it would not have as its function the integration of the social body to assure unity. It is quite legitimate to suppose that the facts which we have just observed reproduce themselves here, but with greater amplitude, that great political societies can maintain themselves in equilibrium only thanks to the specialization of tasks, that the division of labor is the source, if not unique, at least principal, of social solidarity. Comte took this point of view. Of all sociologists, to our knowledge, he is the first to have recognized in the division of labor something other than a purely economic phenomenon. He saw in it "the most essential condition of social life," provided that one conceives it "in all its rational extent; that is to say, that one applies it to the totality of all our diverse operations of whatever kind, instead of attributing it, as is ordinarily done, to simple material usages." Considered in this light, he says,

it leads immediately to regarding not only individuals and classes, but also, in many respects, different peoples, as at once participating, following a definite path in a special degree, exactly determined, in a work, immense and communal, whose

inevitable gradual development links actual cooperators to their predecessors and even to their successors. It is thus the continuous repartition of different human endeavors which especially constitutes social solidarity and which becomes the elementary cause of the extension and growing complication of the social organism. . . .

. . . But social solidarity is a completely moral phenomenon which, taken by itself, does not lend itself to exact observation nor indeed to measurement. . . . [Therefore] we must substitute for this internal fact which escapes us an external index which symbolizes it and study the former in the light of the latter.

This visible symbol is law. In effect, despite its immaterial character, wherever social solidarity exists, it resides not in a state of pure potentiality, but manifests its presence by sensible indices. Where it is strong, it leads men strongly to one another, frequently puts them in contact, multiplies the occasions when they find themselves related. To speak correctly . . . it is not easy to say whether social solidarity produces these phenomena, or whether it is a result of them, whether men relate themselves because it is a driving force, or whether it is a driving force because they relate themselves. However, it is not, at the moment, necessary to decide this question; it suffices to state that the two orders of fact are linked and vary at the same time and in the same sense. The more solidary the members of a society are, the more they sustain diverse relations, one with another, or with the group taken collectively, for, if their meetings were rare, they would depend upon one another, only at rare intervals, and then tenuously. Moreover, the number of these relations is necessarily proportional to that of the juridical rules which determine them. Indeed, social life, especially where it exists durably, tends inevitably to assume a definite form and to organize itself, and law is nothing else than this very organization in so far as it has greater stability and precision. The general life of society cannot extend its sway without juridical life extending its sway at the same time and in direct relation. We can thus be certain of finding reflected in law all the essential varieties of social solidarity.

The objection may be raised, it is true, that social relations can fix themselves without assuming a juridical form. Some of them do not attain this degree of consolidation and precision, but they do not remain undetermined on that account. Instead of being regulated by law, they are regulated by custom. Law, then, reflects only part of social life and furnishes us with incomplete data for the solution of the problem. Moreover, it often happens that custom is not in accord with law; we usually say that it tempers law's



severity, that it corrects law's formalism, sometimes, indeed, that it is animated by a different spirit. Would it not then be true that custom manifests other sorts of solidarity than that expressed in positive law?

This opposition, however, crops up only in quite exceptional circumstances. This comes about when law no longer corresponds to the state of existing society, but maintains itself, without reason for so doing, by the force of habit. In such a case, new relations which establish themselves in spite of it are not bereft of organization, for they cannot endure without seeking consolidation. But since they are in conflict with the old existing law, they can attain only superficial organization. They do not pass beyond the stage of custom and do not enter into the juridical life proper. Thus conflict ensues. But it arises only in rare and pathological cases which cannot endure without danger. Normally, custom is not opposed to law, but is, on the contrary, its basis. It happens, in truth, that on such a basis nothing may rear its head. Social relations ensue which convey a diffuse regulation which comes from custom; but they lack importance and continuity, except in the abnormal cases of which we were just speaking. If, then, there are types of social solidarity which custom alone manifests, they are assuredly secondary; law produces those which are essential and they are the only ones we need to know. . . .

. . . Since law reproduces the principal forms of social solidarity, we have only to classify the different types of law to find therefrom the different types of social solidarity which correspond to it. It is now probable that there is a type which symbolizes this special solidarity of which the division of labor is the cause. That found, it will suffice, in order to measure the part of the division of labor, to compare the number of juridical rules which express it with the total volume of law.

For this task, we cannot use the distinctions utilized by the juriconsults. Created for practical purposes, they can be very useful from this point of view, but science cannot content itself with these empirical classifications and approximations. The most accepted is that which divides law into public and private; the first is for the regulation of the relations of the individual to the State, the second, of individuals among themselves. But when we try to get closer to these terms, the line of demarcation which appeared so neat at the beginning fades away. All law is private in the sense that it is always about individuals who are present and acting; but so, too, all law is public, in the sense that it is a social function and that all individuals are, whatever their varying titles, functionaries of society. Marital functions, paternal, etc., are neither delimited nor organized in a manner different from ministerial and legislative functions, and it is not without reason that Roman law en-

titled tutelage *munus publicum*.<sup>1</sup> What, moreover, is the State? Where does it begin and where does it end? We know how controversial the question is; it is not scientific to make a fundamental classification repose on a notion so obscure and so badly analyzed.

To proceed scientifically, we must find some characteristic which, while being essential to juridical phenomena, varies as they vary. Every precept of law can be defined as a rule of sanctioned conduct. Moreover, it is evident that sanctions change with the gravity attributed to precepts, the place they hold in the public conscience, the role they play in society. It is right, then, to classify juridical rules according to the different sanctions which are attached to them.

They are of two kinds. Some consist essentially in suffering, or at least a loss, inflicted on the agent. They make demands on his fortune, or on his honor, or on his life, or on his liberty, and deprive him of something he enjoys. We call them repressive. They constitute penal law. It is true that those which are attached to rules which are purely moral have the same character, only they are distributed in a diffuse manner, by everybody indiscriminately, whereas those in penal law are applied through the intermediary of a definite organ; they are organized. As for the other type, it does not necessarily imply suffering for the agent, but consists only of *the return of things as they were*, in the reestablishment of troubled relations to their normal state, whether the incriminated act is restored by force to the type whence it deviated, or is annulled, that is, deprived of all social value. We must then separate juridical rules into two great classes, accordingly as they have organized repressive sanctions or only restitutive sanctions. The first comprise all penal law; the second, civil law, commercial law, procedural law, administrative and constitutional law, after abstraction of the penal rules which may be found there.

Let us now seek for the type of social solidarity to which each of these two types corresponds.

## CHAPTER II: MECHANICAL SOLIDARITY THROUGH LIKENESS

The link of social solidarity to which repressive law corresponds is the one whose break constitutes a crime. By this name we call every act which, in any degree whatever, invokes against its author the characteristic reaction which we term punishment. To seek the nature of this link is to inquire into the cause of punishment, or, more precisely, to inquire what crime essentially consists of.

<sup>1</sup> [*Public service.*]

Surely there are crimes of different kinds; but among all these kinds, there is, no less surely, a common element. The proof of this is that the reaction which crimes call forth from society, in respect of punishment, is, save for differences of degree, always and ever the same. The unity of effect shows the unity of the cause. Not only among the types of crime provided for legally in the same society, but even among those which have been or are recognized and punished in different social systems, essential resemblances assuredly exist. As different as they appear at first glance, they must have a common foundation, for they everywhere affect the moral conscience of nations in the same way and produce the same result. They are all crimes; that is to say, acts reprised by definite punishments. The essential properties of a thing are those which one observes universally wherever that thing exists and which pertain to it alone. If, then, we wish to know what crime essentially is, we must extract the elements of crimes which are found similar in all criminological varieties in different social systems. None must be neglected. The juridical conceptions of the most inferior societies are no less significant than those of the most elevated societies; they are not less instructive. To omit any would expose us to the error of finding the essence of crime where it is not. Thus, the biologist would have given vital phenomena a very inexact definition, if he had disdained to observe monocellular organisms, for, solely from the contemplation of organisms of higher type, he would have wrongly concluded that life essentially consists in organization.

The method of finding this permanent and pervasive element is surely not by enumerating the acts that at all times and in every place have been termed crimes, observing, thus, the characters that they present. For if, as it may be, they are actions which have universally been regarded as criminal, they are the smallest minority, and, consequently, such a method would give us a very mistaken notion, since it would be applied only to exceptions. These variations of repressive law prove at the same time that the constant characteristic could not be found among the intrinsic properties of acts imposed or prohibited by penal rules, since they present such diversity, but rather in the relations that they sustain with some condition external to them.

It has been thought that this relation is found in a sort of antagonism between these actions and great social interests, and it has been said that penal rules announce the fundamental conditions of collective life for each social type. Their authority thus derives from their necessity. Moreover, as these necessities vary with societies, the variability of repressive law would thus be explained. But we have already made ourselves explicit on this

point. Besides the fact that such a theory accords too large a part in the direction of social evolution to calculation and reflection, there are many acts which have been and still are regarded as criminal without in themselves being harmful to society. What social danger is there in touching a tabooed object, an impure animal or man, in letting the sacred fire die down, in eating certain meats, in failure to make the traditional sacrifice over the graves of parents, in not exactly pronouncing the ritual formula, in not celebrating certain holidays, etc.? We know, however, what a large place in the repressive law of many peoples ritual regimentation, etiquette, ceremonial, and religious practices play. We have only to open the Pentateuch to convince ourselves, and as these facts normally recur in certain social types, we cannot think of them as anomalies or pathological cases which we can rightly neglect.

Even when a criminal act is certainly harmful to society, it is not true that the amount of harm that it does is regularly related to the intensity of the repression which it calls forth. In the penal law of the most civilized people, murder is universally regarded as the greatest of crimes. However, an economic crisis, a stock-market crash, even a failure, can disorganize the social body more severely than an isolated homicide. No doubt murder is always an evil, but there is no proof that it is the greatest of evils. What is one man less to society? What does one lost cell matter to the organism? We say that the future general security would be menaced if the act remained unpunished; but if we compare the significance of the danger, real as it is, and that of the punishment, the disproportion is striking. Moreover, the examples we have just cited show that an act can be disastrous to society without incurring the least repression. This definition of crime is, then, completely inadequate.

Shall we say, in modifying it, that criminal acts are those which *seem* harmful to the society that represses them, that penal rules express, not the conditions which are essential to social life, but those which *appear* such to the group which observes them? But such an explanation explains nothing, for it does not show why, in so large a number of cases, societies are mistaken and have imposed practices which by themselves were not even useful. Surely this pretended solution of the problem reduces itself to a veritable truism, for if societies thus oblige each individual to obey their rules, it is evidently because they believe, wrongly or rightly, that this regular and punctual obedience is indispensable to them. That is why they hold to it so doggedly. The solution then amounts to saying that societies judge these rules necessary because they judge them necessary. What we must find out



is why they consider them so necessary. If this sentiment had its cause in the objective necessity of penal prescriptions, or, at least, in their utility, it would be an explanation. But that is contradicted by the facts; the question remains entirely unresolved.

However, this last theory is not without some foundation; it is with reason that it seeks in certain states of the subject the constitutive conditions of criminality. In effect, the only common characteristic of all crimes is that they consist—except some apparent exceptions with which we shall deal later—in acts universally disapproved of by members of each society. We ask ourselves these days whether this reprobation is rational, whether it would not be wiser to see in crime only a malady or an error. But we need not enter upon these discussions; we seek to determine what is or has been, not what ought to be. Thus, the reality of the fact that we have just established is not contestable; that is, that crime shocks sentiments which, for a given social system, are found in all healthy consciences. . . .

The totality of beliefs and sentiments common to average citizens of the same society forms a determinate system which has its own life; one may call it the *collective* or *common conscience*. No doubt, it has not a specific organ as a substratum; it is, by definition, diffuse in every reach of society. Nevertheless, it has specific characteristics which make it a distinct reality. It is, in effect, independent of the particular conditions in which individuals are placed; they pass on and it remains. It is the same in the North and in the South, in great cities and in small, in different professions. Moreover, it does not change with each generation, but, on the contrary, it connects successive generations with one another. It is, thus, an entirely different thing from particular consciences, although it can be realized only through them. It is the psychical type of society, a type which has its properties, its conditions of existence, its mode of development, just as individual types, although in a different way. Thus understood, it has the right to be denoted by a special word. The one which we have just employed is not, it is true, without ambiguity. As the terms, *collective* and *social*, are often considered synonymous, one is inclined to believe that the *collective conscience* is the total *social conscience*, that is, extend it to include more than the psychic life of society, although, particularly in advanced societies, it is only a very restricted part. Judicial, governmental, scientific, industrial, in short, all special functions are of a psychic nature, since they consist in systems of representations and actions. They, however, are surely outside the common conscience. To avoid the confusion into which some have fallen, the best way would be to create a technical expression especially to designate the totality of social

similitudes. However, since the use of a new word, when not absolutely necessary, is not without inconvenience, we shall employ the well-worn expression, collective or common conscience, but we shall always mean the strict sense in which we have taken it.

We can, then, . . . say that an act is criminal when it offends strong and defined states of the collective conscience.

The statement of this proposition is not generally called into question, but it is ordinarily given a sense very different from that which it ought to convey. We take it as if it expressed, not the essential property of crime, but one of its repercussions. We well know that crime violates very pervasive and intense sentiments, but we believe that this pervasiveness and this intensity derive from the criminal character of the act, which consequently remains to be defined. We do not deny that every delict is universally reprovved, but we take as agreed that the reprobation to which it is subjected results from its delictness. But we are hard put to say what this delictness consists of. In immorality which is particularly serious? I wish such were the case, but that is to reply to the question by putting one word in place of another, for it is precisely the problem to understand what this immorality is, and especially this particular immorality which society reproves by means of organized punishment and which constitutes criminality. It can evidently come only from one or several characteristics common to all criminological types. The only one which would satisfy this condition is that opposition between a crime, whatever it is, and certain collective sentiments. It is, accordingly, this opposition which makes crime rather than being a derivative of crime. In other words, we must not say that an action shocks the common conscience because it is criminal, but rather that it is criminal because it shocks the common conscience. We do not reprove it because it is a crime, but it is a crime because we reprove it. As for the intrinsic nature of these sentiments, it is impossible to specify them. They have the most diverse objects and cannot be encompassed in a single formula. We can say that they relate neither to vital interests of society nor to a minimum of justice. All these definitions are inadequate. By this alone can we recognize it: a sentiment, whatever its origin and end, is found in all consciences with a certain degree of force and precision, and every action which violates it is a crime. Contemporary psychology is more and more reverting to the idea of Spinoza, according to which things are good because we like them, as against our liking them because they are good. What is primary is the tendency, the inclination; the pleasure and pain are only derivative facts. It is just so in social life. An act is socially bad because society disproves of it. But, it

will be asked, are there not some collective sentiments which result from pleasure and pain which society feels from contact with their ends? No doubt, but they do not all have this origin. A great many, if not the larger part, come from other causes. Everything that leads activity to assume a definite form can give rise to habits, whence result tendencies which must be satisfied. Moreover, it is these latter tendencies which alone are truly fundamental. The others are only special forms and more determinate. Thus, to find charm in such and such an object, collective sensibility must already be constituted so as to be able to enjoy it. If the corresponding sentiments are abolished, the most harmful act to society will not only be tolerated, but even honored and proposed as an example. Pleasure is incapable of creating an impulse out of whole cloth; it can only link those sentiments which exist to such and such a particular end, provided that the end be in accord with their original nature. . . .

. . . [The] analysis of punishment confirms our definition of crime. We began by establishing inductively that crime consisted essentially in an act contrary to strong and defined states of the common conscience. We have just seen that all the qualities of punishment ultimately derive from this nature of crime. That is because the rules that it sanctions express the most essential social likenesses.

Thus we see what type of solidarity penal law symbolizes. Everybody knows that there is a social cohesion whose cause lies in a certain conformity of all particular consciences to a common type which is none other than the psychic type of society. In these conditions, not only are all the members of the group individually attracted to one another because they resemble one another, but also because they are joined to what is the condition of existence of this collective type; that is to say, to the society that they form by their union. Not only do citizens love each other and seek each other out in preference to strangers, but they love their country. They will it as they will themselves, hold to it durably and for prosperity, because, without it, a great part of their psychic lives would function poorly. Inversely, society holds to what they present in the way of fundamental resemblances because that is a condition of its cohesion. There are in us two consciences: one contains states which are personal to each of us and which characterize us, while the states which comprehend the other are common to all society. The first represent only our individual personality and constitute it; the second represent the collective type and, consequently, society, without which it would

not exist. When it is one of the elements of this latter which determines our conduct, it is not in view of our personal interest that we act, but we pursue collective ends. Although distinct, these two consciences are linked one to the other, since, in sum, they are only one, having one and the same organic substratum. They are thus solidary. From this results a solidarity *sui generis*, which, born of resemblances, directly links the individual with society. . . . This solidarity does not consist only in a general and indeterminate attachment of the individual to the group, but also makes the detail of his movements harmonious. In short, as these collective movements are always the same, they always produce the same effects. Consequently, each time that they are in play, wills move spontaneously and together in the same sense.

It is this solidarity which repressive law expresses, at least whatever there is vital in it. The acts that it prohibits and qualifies as crimes are of two sorts. Either they directly manifest very violent dissemblance between the agent who accomplishes them and the collective type, or else they offend the organ of the common conscience. In one case as in the other, the force that is offended by the crime and which suppresses it is thus the same. It is a product of the most essential social likenesses, and it has for its effect the maintenance of the social cohesion which results from these likenesses. It is this force which penal law protects against all enfeeblement, both in demanding from each of us a minimum of resemblances without which the individual would be a menace to the unity of the social body, and in imposing upon us the respect for the symbol which expresses and summarizes these resemblances at the same time that it guarantees them.

We thus explain why acts have been so often reputed criminal and punished as such without, in themselves, being evil for society. That is, just as the individual type, the collective type is formed from very diverse causes and even from fortuitous combinations. Produced through historical development, it carries the mark of circumstances of every kind which society has gone through in its history. It would be miraculous, then, if everything that we find there were adjusted to some useful end. But it cannot be that elements more or less numerous were there introduced without having any relation to social utility. Among the inclinations and tendencies that the individual has received from his ancestors, or which he has formed himself, many are certainly of no use, or cost more than they are worth. Of course, the majority are not harmful, for being, under such conditions, does not mean activity. But there are some of them remaining without any use, and those whose services are most incontestable often have an intensity which



has no relation to their utility, because it comes to them, in part, from other causes. The case is the same with collective passions. All the acts which offend them are not dangerous in themselves, or, at least, are not as dangerous as they are made out to be. But, the reprobation of which these acts are the object still has reason for existing, whatever the origin of the sentiments involved, once they are made part of a collective type, and especially if they are essential elements, everything which contributes to disturb them, at the same time disturbs social cohesion and compromises society. It was not at all useful for them to be born, but once they have endured, it becomes necessary that they persist in spite of their irrationality. That is why it is good, in general, that the acts which offend them be not tolerated. Of course, reasoning in the abstract, we may well show that there is no reason for a society to forbid the eating of such and such a meat, in itself inoffensive. But once the horror of this has become an integral part of the common conscience, it cannot disappear without a social link being broken, and that is what sane consciences obscurely feel. . . .<sup>2</sup>

The result of this chapter is this: there exists a social solidarity which comes from a certain number of states of conscience which are common to all the members of the same society. This is what repressive law materially represents, at least in so far as it is essential. The part that it plays in the general integration of society evidently depends upon the greater or lesser extent of the social life which the common conscience embraces and regulates. The greater the diversity of relations wherein the latter makes its action felt, the more also it creates links which attach the individual to the group; the more, consequently, social cohesion derives completely from this source and bears its mark. But the number of these relations is itself proportional to that of the repressive rules. In determining what fraction of the juridical system penal law represents, we, at the same time, measure the relative importance of this solidarity. It is true that in such a procedure we do not take into account certain elements of the collective conscience which, because of their smaller power or their indeterminateness, remain foreign to repressive law while contributing to the assurance of social harmony. These are the ones protected by punishments which are merely diffuse. But the same is the case with other parts of law. There is not one of them which is not complemented by custom, and as there is no reason for

<sup>2</sup> That does not mean that it is necessary to conserve a penal rule because, at some given moment, it corresponded to some collective sentiment. It has a *raison d'être* only if this latter is living and energetic. If it has disappeared or been enfeebled, nothing is vainer or worse than trying to keep it alive artificially or by force. It can even be that it was necessary to combat a practice which was common, but is no longer so, and opposes the establishment of new and necessary practices. . . .

supposing that the relation of law and custom is not the same in these different spheres, this elimination is not made at the risk of having to alter the results of our comparison.

#### CHAPTER III: ORGANIC SOLIDARITY DUE TO THE DIVISION OF LABOR

The very nature of the restitutive sanction suffices to show that the social solidarity to which this type of law corresponds is of a totally different kind.

What distinguishes this sanction is that it is not expiatory, but consists of a simple *return in state*. Sufferance proportionate to the misdeed is not inflicted on the one who has violated the law or who disregards it; he is simply sentenced to comply with it. If certain things were done, the judge reinstates them as they would have been. He speaks of law; he says nothing of punishment. Damage-interests have no penal character; they are only a means of reviewing the past in order to reinstate it, as far as possible, to its normal form. Tarde, it is true, has tried to find a sort of civil penalty in the payment of costs by the defeated party. But, taken in this sense, the word has only a metaphorical value. For punishment to obtain, there would at least have to be some relation between the punishment and the misdeed, and for that it would be necessary for the degree of gravity of the misdeed to be firmly established. In fact, however, he who loses the litigation pays the damages even when his intentions were pure, even when his ignorance alone was his culpability. The reasons for this rule are different from those offered by Tarde: given the fact that justice is not rendered gratuitously, it appears equitable for the damages to be paid by the one who brought them into being. Moreover, it is possible that the prospect of such costs may stop the rash pleader, but that is not sufficient to constitute punishment. The fear of ruin which ordinarily follows indolence or negligence may keep the negotiant active and awake, though ruin is not, in the proper sense of the word, the penal sanction for his misdeeds.

Neglect of these rules is not even punished diffusely. The pleader who has lost in litigation is not disgraced, his honor is not put in question. We can even imagine these rules being other than they are without feeling any repugnance. The idea of tolerating murder arouses us, but we quite easily accept modification of the right of succession, and can even conceive of its possible abolition. It is at least a question which we do not refuse to discuss. Indeed, we admit with impunity that the law of servitudes or that of usufructs may be otherwise organized, that the obligations of vendor and purchaser may be determined in some other manner, that administrative functions may be distributed according to different principles. As these

prescriptions do not correspond to any sentiment in us, and as we generally do not scientifically know the reasons for their existence, since this science is not definite, they have no roots in the majority of us. Of course, there are exceptions. We do not tolerate the idea that an engagement contrary to custom or obtained either through violence or fraud can bind the contracting parties. Thus, when public opinion finds itself in the presence of such a case, it shows itself less indifferent than we have just now said, and it increases the legal sanction by its censure. The different domains of the moral life are not radically separated one from another; they are, rather, continuous, and, accordingly, there are among them marginal regions where different characters are found at the same time. However, the preceding proposition remains true in the great majority of cases. It is proof that the rules with a restitutive sanction either do not totally derive from the collective conscience, or are only feeble states of it. Repressive law corresponds to the heart, the centre of the common conscience; laws purely moral are a part less central; finally, restitutive law is born in very ex-centric regions whence it spreads further. The more it becomes truly itself, the more removed it is.

This characteristic is, indeed, made manifest by the manner of its functioning. While repressive law tends to remain diffuse within society, restitutive law creates organs which are more and more specialized: consular tribunals, councils of arbitration, administrative tribunals of every sort. Even in its most general part, that which pertains to civil law, it is exercised only through particular functionaries: magistrates, lawyers, etc., who have become apt in this role because of very special training.

But, although these rules are more or less outside the collective conscience, they are not interested solely in individuals. If this were so, restitutive law would have nothing in common with social solidarity, for the relations that it regulates would bind individuals to one another without binding them to society. They would simply be happenings in private life, as friendly relations are. But society is far from having no hand in this sphere of juridical life. It is true that, generally, it does not intervene of itself and through its own movements; it must be solicited by the interested parties. But, in being called forth, its intervention is none the less the essential cog in the machine, since it alone makes it function. It propounds the law through the organ of its representatives.

It has been contended, however, that this role has nothing properly social about it, but reduces itself to that of a conciliator of private interests; that, consequently, any individual can fill it, and that, if society is in charge of it, it is only for commodious reasons. But nothing is more incorrect than

considering society as a sort of third-party arbitrator. When it is led to intervene, it is not to put to rights some individual interests. It does not seek to discover what may be the most advantageous solution for the adversaries and does not propose a compromise for them. Rather, it applies to the particular case which is submitted to it general and traditional rules of law. But law is, above all, a social thing and has a totally different object than the interest of the pleaders. The judge who examines a request for divorce is not concerned with knowing whether this separation is truly desirable for the married parties, but rather whether the causes which are adduced come under one of the categories foreseen by the law.

But better to appreciate the importance of social action, we must observe it, not only at the moment when the sanction is applied, when the troubled relation is adjudicated, but also when it is instituted.

It is, in effect, necessary either to establish or to modify a number of juridical relations which this law takes care of and which the consent of the interested parties suffices neither to create nor to change. Such are those, notably, which concern the state of the persons. Although marriage is a contract, the married persons can neither form it nor break it at their pleasure. It is the same with all the other domestic relations and, with stronger reason, with all those which administrative law regulates. It is true that obligations properly contractual can be entered into and abrogated solely through the efforts of those desiring them. But it must not be forgotten that, if the contract has the power to bind, it is society which gives this power to it. Suppose that society did not sanction the obligations contracted for. They become simply promises which have no more than moral authority. Every contract thus supposes that behind the parties implicated in it there is society very ready to intervene in order to gain respect for the engagements which have been made. Moreover, it lends this obligatory force only to contracts which have in themselves a social value, which is to say, those which conform to the rules of law. We shall see that its intervention is sometimes even more positive. It is present in all relations which restitutive law determines, even in those which appear most completely private, and its presence, though not felt, at least in normal circumstances, is none the less essential.

Since rules with restitutive sanctions are strangers to the common conscience, the relations that they determine are not those which attach themselves indistinctly everywhere. That is to say, they are established immediately, not between the individual and society, but between restricted, special parties in society whom they bind. But, since society is not absent, it must be more or less directly interested, it must feel the repercussions. Thus, accord-



ing to the force with which society feels them, it intervenes more or less concomitantly and more or less actively, through the intermediary or special organs charged with representing it. These relations are, then, quite different from those which repressive law regulates, for the latter attach the particular conscience to the collective conscience directly and without mediation; that is, the individual to society.

But these relations can take two very different forms: sometimes they are negative and reduce themselves to pure abstention; sometimes they are positive and co-operative. To the two classes of rules which determine these, there correspond two sorts of social solidarity which we must distinguish.

The negative relation which may serve as a type for the others is the one which unites the thing to the person.

Things, to be sure, form part of society just as persons, and they play a specific role in it. Thus it is necessary that their relations with the social organism be determined. We may then say that there is a solidarity of things whose nature is quite special and translates itself outside through juridical consequences of a very particular character.

The jurisconsults distinguish two kinds of rights: to one they give the name real; to the other, that of personal. The right of property, the pledge, pertains to the first type; the right of credit to the second. What characterizes real rights is that only they give a preferential and successoral right. Thus, the right that I have in the thing excludes anyone else from coming to usurp what is mine. If, for example, a thing has been successively hypothecated to two creditors, the second pledge can in no wise restrain the rights of the first. Moreover, if my debtor alienates the thing in which I have a right of hypothecation, that is in no wise attacked, but the third party is held either to pay me or to lose what he has acquired. But for this to come about, it is necessary that the bond of law unite me directly and without the mediation of any other person to the thing determinate of my juridical personality. This privileged situation is, then, the consequence of the solidarity proper to things. On the other hand, when the right is personal, the person who is obligated to me can, in contracting new obligations, give me co-creditors whose right is equal to mine, and although I may have as security all the goods of my debtor, if he alienates them, they come out of my security and patrimony. The reason for this is that there is no special relation between these goods and me, but between the person of their owner and my own person.

Thus we see what this real solidarity consists of; it directly links things

to persons, but not persons among themselves. In a strict sense, one can exercise a real right by thinking one is alone in the world, without reference to other men. Consequently, since it is only through the medium of persons that things are integrated in society, the solidarity resulting from this integration is wholly negative. It does not lead wills to move toward common ends, but merely makes things gravitate around wills in orderly fashion. Because real rights are thus limited, they do not cause conflicts; hostility is precluded, but there is no active coming together, no consensus. Suppose an agreement of this kind were as perfect as possible; the society in which it exists—if it exists alone—will resemble an immense constellation where each star moves in its orbit without concern for the movements of neighboring stars. Such solidarity does not make the elements that it relates at all capable of acting together; it contributes nothing to the unity of the social body. . . .

In short, the rules relative to real rights and to personal relations which are established in their turn form a definite system which has as its function, not to attach different parts of society to one another, but, on the contrary, to put them outside one another, to mark cleanly the barriers which separate them. They do not correspond to a positive social link. The very expression of negative solidarity which we have used is not perfectly exact. It is not a true solidarity, having its own existence and its special nature, but rather the negative side of every species of solidarity. The first condition of total coherence is that the parties who compose it should not interfere with one another through discordant movements. But this external accord does not make for cohesion; on the contrary, it supposes it. Negative solidarity is possible only where there exists some other of a positive nature, of which it is at once the resultant and the condition.

In effect, the rights of individuals, as much in themselves as in things, can be determined only thanks to some compromise and some mutual concessions, for everything which is accorded to some is necessarily abandoned by the others. It has sometimes been said that we can deduce the normal extent of the development of the individual from the concept of human personality (Kant), or from the notion of the individual organism (Spencer). That is possible, although the rigor of the rationalizations may be very contestable. In any event, what is certain is that in historical reality it is not on these abstract considerations that the moral order has been founded. In fact, in order that man might recognize the rights of others, not only logically, but in the practical workaday world, it was necessary that he consent to limit his rights, and, consequently, this mutual limitation could be made

only in a spirit of agreement and accord. But, if we suppose a multitude of individuals without previous links between them, what reason could there have been to induce them to make these reciprocal sacrifices? The need for living in peace? But peace by itself is not a thing more desirable than war. War has its interest, and its advantages. Have there not been some peoples and, at all times, some individuals in whom it was a passion? The instincts to which it responds are not less strong than those which peace satisfies. Doubtless, fatigue can for a time put an end to hostilities, but this bare armistice cannot be more durable than the temporary lassitude which occasions it. The case is even stronger in respect of the conclusions due solely to the triumph of force; they are as provisory and precarious as the treaties which put an end to international wars. Men have need of peace only as they are already united by some tie of sociability. In this case, the sentiments which incline them towards each other quite naturally moderate the urgings of egoism; and, from another standpoint, the society which envelops them, not being able to live except on condition of not being at every instant embroiled in conflicts, urges on them, and obliges them to make, necessary concessions.

It is true that we sometimes see independent societies agreeing to determine their respective rights over things, that is to say, their territories. But really, the extreme instability of these relations is the best proof that negative solidarity cannot alone suffice. If today, among cultivated peoples, it seems to have more force, if that part of international law which regulates what we might call the real rights of European societies has more authority than heretofore, it is because the different nations of Europe are much less independent of one another because, in certain respects, they are all part of the same society, still incoherent, it is true, but becoming more and more self-conscious. What we call the equilibrium of Europe is a beginning of the organization of this society.

It is customary to distinguish carefully justice from charity; that is, simple respect for the rights of another from every act which goes beyond this purely negative virtue. We see in the two sorts of activity two independent layers of morality: justice, in itself, would only consist of fundamental postulates; charity would be the perfection of justice. The distinction is so radical that, according to partisans of a certain type of morality, justice alone would serve to make the functioning of social life good; generous self-denial would be a private virtue, worthy of pursuit by a particular individual, but dispensable to society. Many even look askance at its intrusion into public life. We can see from what has preceded how little in accord with

the facts this conception is. In reality, for men to recognize and mutually guarantee rights, they must, first of all, love each other, they must, for some reason, depend upon each other and on the same society of which they are a part. Justice is full of charity, or, to employ our expressions, negative solidarity is only an emanation from some other solidarity whose nature is positive. It is the repercussion in the sphere of real rights of social sentiments which come from another source. There is nothing specific about it, but it is the necessary accompaniment of every type of solidarity. It is met with forcefully wherever men live a common life, and that comes from the division of social labor or from the attraction of like for like. . . .

Since negative solidarity does not produce any integration by itself, and since, moreover, there is nothing specific about it, we shall recognize only two kinds of positive solidarity which are distinguishable by the following qualities:

1. The first binds the individual directly to society without any intermediary. In the second, he depends upon society, because he depends upon the parts of which it is composed.

2. Society is not seen in the same aspect in the two cases. In the first, what we call society is a more or less organized totality of beliefs and sentiments common to all the members of the group: this is the collective type. On the other hand, the society in which we are solidary in the second instance is a system of different, special functions which definite relations unite. These two societies really make up only one. They are two aspects of one and the same reality, but none the less they must be distinguished.

3. From this second difference there arises another which helps us to characterize and name the two kinds of solidarity.

The first can be strong only if the ideas and tendencies common to all the members of the society are greater in number and intensity than those which pertain personally to each member. It is as much stronger as the excess is more considerable. But what makes our personality is how much of our own individual qualities we have, what distinguishes us from others. This solidarity can grow only in inverse ratio to personality. There are in each of us, as we have said, two consciences: one which is common to our group in its entirety, which, consequently, is not *ourselves*, but society living and acting within us; the other, on the contrary, represents that in us which is personal and distinct, that which makes us an individual.<sup>3</sup> Solidarity which

<sup>3</sup> However, these two consciences are not in regions geographically distinct from us, but penetrate from all sides.



comes from likenesses is at its maximum when the collective conscience completely envelops our whole conscience and coincides in all points with it. But, at that moment, our individuality is nil. It can be born only if the community takes smaller toll of us. There are, here, two contrary forces, one centripetal, the other centrifugal, which cannot flourish at the same time. We cannot, at one and the same time, develop ourselves in two opposite senses. If we have a lively desire to think and act for ourselves, we cannot be strongly inclined to think and act as others do. If our ideal is to present a singular and personal appearance, we do not want to resemble everybody else. Moreover, at the moment when this solidarity exercises its force, our personality vanishes, as our definition permits us to say, for we are no longer ourselves, but the collective life.

The social molecules which can be coherent in this way can act together only in the measure that they have no actions of their own, as the molecules of inorganic bodies. That is why we propose to call this type of solidarity mechanical. The term does not signify that it is produced by mechanical and artificial means. We call it that only by analogy to the cohesion which unites the elements of an inanimate body, as opposed to that which makes a unity out of the elements of a living body. What justifies this term is that the link which thus unites the individual to society is wholly analogous to that which attaches a thing to a person. The individual conscience, considered in this light, is a simple dependent upon the collective type and follows all of its movements, as the possessed object follows those of its owner. In societies where this type of solidarity is highly developed, the individual does not appear. . . . Individuality is something which the society possesses. Thus, in these social types, personal rights are not yet distinguished from real rights.

It is quite otherwise with the solidarity which the division of labor produces. Whereas the previous type implies that individuals resemble each other, this type presumes their difference. The first is possible only in so far as the individual personality is absorbed into the collective personality; the second is possible only if each one has a sphere of action which is peculiar to him; that is, a personality. It is necessary, then, that the collective conscience leave open a part of the individual conscience in order that special functions may be established there, functions which it cannot regulate. The more this region is extended, the stronger is the cohesion which results from this solidarity. In effect, on the one hand, each one depends as much more strictly on society as labor is more divided; and, on the other, the activity of each is as much more personal as it is more specialized. Doubtless, as

circumscribed as it is, it is never completely original. Even in the exercise of our occupation, we conform to usages, to practices which are common to our whole professional brotherhood. But, even in this instance, the yoke that we submit to is much less heavy than when society completely controls us, and it leaves much more place open for the free play of our initiative. Here, then, the individuality of all grows at the same time as that of its parts. Society becomes more capable of collective movement, at the same time that each of its elements has more freedom of movement. This solidarity resembles that which we observe among the higher animals. Each organ, in effect, has its special physiognomy, its autonomy. And, moreover, the unity of the organism is as great as the individuation of the parts is more marked. Because of this analogy, we propose to call the solidarity which is due to the division of labor, organic. . . .

#### CHAPTER VII: ORGANIC SOLIDARITY AND CONTRACTUAL SOLIDARITY

. . . The following propositions sum up . . . [this] part of our work.

Social life comes from a double source, the likeness of consciences and the division of social labor. The individual is socialized in the first case, because, not having any real individuality, he becomes, with those whom he resembles, part of the same collective type; in the second case, because, while having a physiognomy and a personal activity which distinguishes him from others, he depends upon them in the same measure that he is distinguished from them, and consequently upon the society which results from their union.

The similitude of consciences gives rise to juridical rules which, with the threat of repressive measures, impose uniform beliefs and practices upon all. The more pronounced this is, the more completely is social life confounded with religious life, and the nearer to communism are economic institutions.

The division of labor gives rise to juridical rules which determine the nature and the relations of divided functions, but whose violation calls forth only restitutive measures without any expiatory character.

Each of these bodies of juridical rules is, moreover, accompanied by a body of purely moral rules. Where penal law is very voluminous, common morality is very extensive; that is to say, there is a multitude of collective practices placed under the protection of public opinion. Where restitutive law is highly developed, there is an occupational morality for each profession. In the interior of the same group of workers, there exists an opinion, diffuse in the entire extent of this circumscribed aggregate, which, without being fur-

nished with legal sanctions, is rendered obedience. There are usages and customs common to the same order of functionaries which no one of them can break without incurring the censure of the corporation. This morality is distinguished from the preceding by differences analogous to those which separate the two corresponding types of law. It is localized in a limited region of society. Moreover, the repressive character of the sanctions attaching to it is much less accentuated. Professional misdeeds call forth reprobation much more feeble than attacks against public morality.

The rules of occupational morality and justice, however, are as imperative as the others. They force the individual to act in view of ends which are not strictly his own, to make concessions, to consent to compromises, to take into account interests higher than his own. Consequently, even where society relies most completely upon the division of labor, it does not become a jumble of juxtaposed atoms, between which it can establish only external, transient contacts. Rather the members are united by ties which extend deeper and far beyond the short moments during which the exchange is made. Each of the functions that they exercise is, in a fixed way, dependent upon others, and with them forms a solidary system. Accordingly, from the nature of the chosen task permanent duties arise. Because we fill some certain domestic or social function, we are involved in a complex of obligations from which we have no right to free ourselves. There is, above all, an organ upon which we are tending to depend more and more; this is the State. The points at which we are in contact with it multiply as do the occasions when it is entrusted with the duty of reminding us of the sentiment of common solidarity.

Thus, altruism is not destined to become, as Spencer desires, a sort of agreeable ornament to social life, but it will forever be its fundamental basis. How can we ever really dispense with it? Men cannot live together without acknowledging, and, consequently, making mutual sacrifices, without tying themselves to one another with strong, durable bonds. Every society is a moral society. In certain respects, this character is even more pronounced in organized societies. Because the individual is not sufficient unto himself, it is from society that he receives everything necessary to him, as it is for society that he works. Thus is formed a very strong sentiment of the state of dependence in which he finds himself. He becomes accustomed to estimating it at its just value, that is to say, in regarding himself as part of a whole, the organ of an organism. Such sentiments naturally inspire not only mundane sacrifices which assure the regular development of daily social life, but even, on occasion, acts of complete self-renunciation and whole-

sale abnegation. On its side, society learns to regard its members no longer as things over which it has rights, but as co-operators whom it cannot neglect and towards whom it owes duties. Thus, it is wrong to oppose a society which comes from a community of beliefs to one which has a co-operative basis, according only to the first a moral character, and seeing in the latter only an economic grouping. In reality, co-operation also has its intrinsic morality. There is, however, reason to believe . . . that in contemporary societies this morality has not yet reached the high development which would now seem necessary to it.

But it is not of the same nature as the other. The other is strong only if the individual is not. Made up of rules which are practiced by all indistinctly, it receives from this universal, uniform practice an authority which bestows something superhuman upon it, and which puts it beyond the pale of discussion. The co-operative society, on the contrary, develops in the measure that individual personality becomes stronger. As regulated as a function may be, there is a large place always left for personal initiative. A great many of the obligations thus sanctioned have their origin in a choice of the will. It is we who choose our professions, and even certain of our domestic functions. Of course, once our resolution has ceased to be internal and has been externally translated by social consequences, we are tied down. Duties are imposed upon us that we have not expressly desired. It is, however, through a voluntary act that this has taken place. Finally, because these rules of conduct relate, not to the conditions of common life, but to the different forms of professional activity, they have a more temporal character, which, while lessening their obligatory force, renders them more accessible to the action of men.

There are, then, two great currents of social life to which two types of structure, not less different, correspond.

Of these currents, that which has its origin in social similitudes first runs on alone and without a rival. At this moment, it confounds itself with the very life of society; then, little by little, it canalizes, rarifies, while the second is always growing. Indeed, the segmental structure is more and more covered over by the other, but without ever completely disappearing. . . .

### [*Book III*]

#### CONCLUSION

One last consideration will make us see to what extent the division of labor is linked with our whole moral life.



Men have long dreamt of finally realizing in fact the ideal of human fraternity. People pray for a state where war will no longer be the law of international relations, where relations between societies will be pacifically regulated, as those between individuals already are, where all men will collaborate in the same work and live the same life. Although these aspirations are in part neutralized by those which have as their object the particular society of which we are a part, they have not left off being active and are even gaining in force. But they can be satisfied only if all men form one society, subject to the same laws. For, just as private conflicts can be regulated only by the action of the society in which the individuals live, so inter-social conflicts can be regulated only by a society which comprises in its scope all others. The only power which can serve to moderate individual egotism is the power of the group; the only power which can serve to moderate the egotism of groups is that of some other group which embraces them.

Truly, when the problem has been posed in these terms, we must recognize that this ideal is not on the verge of being integrally realized, for there are too many intellectual and moral diversities between different social types existing together on the earth to admit of fraternalization in the same society. But what is possible is that societies of the same type may come together, and it is, indeed, in this direction that evolution appears to move. We have already seen that among European peoples there is a tendency to form, by spontaneous movement, a European society which has, at present, some idea of itself and the beginning of organization. If the formation of a single human society is forever impossible, a fact which has not been proved, at least the formation of continually larger societies brings us vaguely near the goal. These facts, moreover, in no wise contradict the definition of morality that we have given, for if we cling to humanity and if we ought to cling to it, it is because it is a society which is in process of realizing itself in this way, and with which we are solidary.

But we know that greater societies cannot be formed except through the development of the division of labor, for not only could they not maintain themselves in equilibrium without a greater specialization of functions, but even the increase in the number of those competing would suffice to produce this result mechanically; and that, so much the more, since the growth of volume is generally accompanied by a growth in density. We can then formulate the following proposition: the ideal of human fraternity can be realized only in proportion to the progress of the division of labor. We must choose: either to renounce our dream, if we refuse further to circumscribe

our activity, or else to push forward its accomplishment under the condition we have just set forth.

But if the division of labor produces solidarity, it is not only because it makes each individual an *exchangist*, as the economists say; it is because it creates among men an entire system of rights and duties which link them together in a durable way. Just as social similitudes give rise to a law and a morality which protect them, so the division of labor gives rise to rules which assure pacific and regular concourse of divided functions. If economists have believed that it would bring forth an abiding solidarity, in some manner of its own making, and if, accordingly, they have held that human societies could and would resolve themselves into purely economic associations, that is because they believed that it affected only individual, temporary interests. Consequently, to estimate the interests in conflict and the way in which they ought to equilibrate, that is to say, to determine the conditions under which exchange ought to take place, is solely a matter of individual competence; and, since these interests are in a perpetual state of becoming, there is no place for any permanent regulation. But such a conception is, in all ways, inadequate for the facts. The division of labor does not present individuals to one another, but social functions. And society is interested in the play of the latter; in so far as they regularly concur, or do not concur, it will be healthy or ill. Its existence thus depends upon them, and the more they are divided the greater its dependence. That is why it cannot leave them in a state of indetermination. In addition to this, they are determined by themselves. Thus are formed those rules whose number grows as labor is divided, and whose absence makes organic solidarity either impossible or imperfect.

But it is not enough that there be rules; they must be just, and for that it is necessary for the external conditions of competition to be equal. If, moreover, we remember that the collective conscience is becoming more and more a cult of the individual, we shall see that what characterizes the morality of organized societies, compared to that of segmental societies, is that there is something more human, therefore more rational, about them. It does not direct our activities to ends which do not immediately concern us; it does not make us servants of ideal powers of a nature other than our own, which follow their directions without occupying themselves with the interests of men. It only asks that we be thoughtful of our fellows and that we be just, that we fulfill our duty, that we work at the function we can best execute, and receive the just reward for our services. The rules which constitute

it do not have a constraining force which snuffs out free thought; but, because they are rather made for us and, in a certain sense, by us, we are free. We wish to understand them; we do not fear to change them. We must, however, guard against finding such an ideal inadequate on the pretext that it is too earthly and too much to our liking. An ideal is not more elevated because more transcendent, but because it leads us to vaster perspectives. What is important is not that it tower high above us, until it becomes a stranger to our lives, but that it open to our activity a large enough field. This is far from being on the verge of realization. We know only too well what a laborious work it is to erect this society where each individual will have the place he merits, will be rewarded as he deserves, where everybody, accordingly, will spontaneously work for the good of all and of each. Indeed, a moral code is not above another because it commands in a drier and more authoritarian manner, or because it is more sheltered from reflection. Of course, it must attach us to something besides ourselves but it is not necessary for it to chain us to it with impregnable bonds.

It has been said with justice that morality—and by that must be understood, not only moral doctrines, but customs—is going through a real crisis. What precedes can help us to understand the nature and causes of this sick condition. Profound changes have been produced in the structure of our societies in a very short time; they have been freed from the segmental type with a rapidity and in proportions such as have never before been seen in history. Accordingly, the morality which corresponds to this social type has regressed, but without another developing quickly enough to fill the ground that the first left vacant in our consciences. Our faith has been troubled; tradition has lost its sway; individual judgment has been freed from collective judgment. But, on the other hand, the functions which have been disrupted in the course of the upheaval have not had the time to adjust themselves to one another; the new life which has emerged so suddenly has not been able to be completely organized, and above all, it has not been organized in a way to satisfy the need for justice which has grown more ardent in our hearts. If this be so, the remedy for the evil is not to seek to resuscitate traditions and practices which, no longer responding to present conditions of society, can only live an artificial, false existence. What we must do to relieve this anomaly is to discover the means for making the organs which are still wasting themselves in discordant movements harmoniously concur by introducing into their relations more justice, by more and more extenuating the external inequalities which are the source of the evil. Our illness is not, then, as has often been believed, of an intellectual sort; it has more profound

causes. We shall not suffer because we no longer know on what theoretical notion to base the morality we have been practicing, but because, in certain of its parts, this morality is irremediably shattered, and that which is necessary to us is only in process of formation. Our anxiety does not arise because the criticism of scholars has broken down the traditional explanation we use to give to our duties; consequently, it is not a new philosophical system which will relieve the situation. Because certain of our duties are no longer founded in the reality of things, a breakdown has resulted which will be repaired only in so far as a new discipline is established and consolidated. In short, our first duty is to make a moral code for ourselves. Such a work cannot be improvised in the silence of the study; it can arise only through itself, little by little, under the pressure of internal causes which make it necessary. But the service that thought can and must render is in fixing the goal that we must attain. That is what we have tried to do.



## HENRY SUMNER MAINE

SIR HENRY SUMNER MAINE (1822-1888) has been recognized as one of the most prodigious scholars and articulate thinkers of the history of legal thought. His works ranged from comparative studies of legal and political traditions to systematic analyses of the history of social institutions. A classic example of Maine's contribution has been his interpretation of the history of "progressive" societies. He viewed the development of individualism in such societies as a movement *from status to contract*. That is, a social order based on the "free agreement of individuals" has come to replace the dependency on the family unit as the influential factor in the shaping of our legal and social traditions. As analytic concepts, Maine's jurisprudential terms "status" and "contract" shed light upon such contrasting distinctions between modes of social organization as that of Durkheim between mechanical and organic solidarity, and that of the German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies (made in the subsequent selection) between "community" and "society."

Maine's academic career at Cambridge and Oxford exerted a significant influence upon his colleagues and students. And through his interest in the historical character of institutions he added a new dimension to the study of jurisprudence in the nineteenth century. From 1847 to 1854 he was professor of civil law at Cambridge. He resided in India as a law member of the government of that country for seven years and was influential in effecting some important legal reforms. In 1869 he became professor of jurisprudence at Oxford, and the following year was made a member of the Council of the Secretary of State for India. He was knighted that same year. In 1877 Maine became master of Trinity College, Cambridge, and ten years later he was appointed professor of international law.

His most important books have been *Roman Law and Legal Education* (1856), *Village Communities* (1871), *Early History of Institutions* (1875), and *Dissertations on Early Law and Custom* (1883). The following selection is from his classic *Ancient Law* (1861).



### ANCIENT LAW

#### CHAPTER V: PRIMITIVE SOCIETY AND ANCIENT LAW

. . . The rudiments of the social state, so far as they are known to us at all, are known through testimony of three sorts—accounts by contemporary

---

This selection has been reprinted from Sir Henry Sumner Maine, *Ancient Law* (pp. 99-141, 1931, Oxford University Press, London).

observers of civilisations less advanced than their own, the records which particular races have preserved concerning their primitive history, and ancient law. The first kind of evidence is the best we could have expected. As societies do not advance concurrently, but at different rates of progress, there have been epochs at which men trained to habits of methodical observation have really been in a position to watch and describe the infancy of mankind. Tacitus made the most of such an opportunity; but the *Germany*, unlike most celebrated classical books, has not induced others to follow the excellent example set by its author, and the amount of this sort of testimony which we possess is exceedingly small. The lofty contempt which a civilised people entertains for barbarous neighbours has caused a remarkable negligence in observing them, and this carelessness has been aggravated at times by fear, by religious prejudice, and even by the use of these very terms—civilisation and barbarism—which convey to most persons the impression of a difference not merely in degree but in kind. Even the *Germany* has been suspected by some critics of sacrificing fidelity to poignancy of contrast and picturesqueness of narrative. Other histories too, which have been handed down to us among the archives of the people to whose infancy they relate, have been thought distorted by the pride of race or by the religious sentiment of a newer age. It is important then to observe that these suspicions, whether groundless or rational, do not attach to a great deal of archaic law. Much of the old law which has descended to us was preserved merely because it was old. Those who practised and obeyed it did not pretend to understand it; and in some cases they even ridiculed and despised it. They offered no account of it except that it had come down to them from their ancestors. If we confine our attention, then, to those fragments of ancient institutions which cannot reasonably be supposed to have been tampered with, we are able to gain a clear conception of certain great characteristics of the society to which they originally belonged. Advancing a step further, we can apply our knowledge to systems of law which, like the Code of Menu, are as a whole of suspicious authenticity; and, using the key we have obtained, we are in a position to discriminate those portions of them which are truly archaic from those which have been affected by the prejudices, interests, or ignorance of the compiler. It will at least be acknowledged that, if the materials for this process are sufficient, and if the comparisons be accurately executed, the methods followed are as little objectionable as those which have led to such surprising results in comparative philology.

The effect of the evidence derived from comparative jurisprudence is to

establish that view of the primeval condition of the human race which is known as the Patriarchal Theory. There is no doubt, of course, that this theory was originally based on the Scriptural history of the Hebrew patriarchs in Lower Asia; but . . . its connexion with Scripture rather militated than otherwise against its reception as a complete theory, since the majority of the inquirers who till recently addressed themselves with most earnestness to the colligation of social phenomena, were either influenced by the strongest prejudice against Hebrew antiquities or by the strongest desire to construct their system without the assistance of religious records. Even now there is perhaps a disposition to undervalue these accounts, or rather to decline generalising from them, as forming part of the traditions of a Semitic people. It is to be noted, however, that the legal testimony comes nearly exclusively from the institutions of societies belonging to the Indo-European stock, the Romans, Hindoos, and Sclavonians supplying the greater part of it; and indeed the difficulty, at the present stage of the inquiry, is to know where to stop, to say of what races of men it is *not* allowable to lay down that the society in which they are united was originally organised on the patriarchal model. The chief lineaments of such a society, as collected from the early chapters in Genesis, I need not attempt to depict with any minuteness, both because they are familiar to most of us from our earliest childhood, and because, from the interest once attaching to the controversy which takes its name from the debate between Locke and Filmer, they fill a whole chapter, though not a very profitable one, in English literature. The points which lie on the surface of the history are these:—The eldest male parent—the eldest ascendant—is absolutely supreme in his household. His dominion extends to life and death, and is as unqualified over his children and their houses as over his slaves; indeed the relations of sonship and serfdom appear to differ in little beyond the higher capacity which the child in blood possesses of becoming one day the head of a family himself. The flocks and herds of the children are the flocks and herds of the father, and the possessions of the parent, which he holds in a representative rather than in a proprietary character, are equally divided at his death among his descendants in the first degree, the eldest son sometimes receiving a double share under the name of birthright, but more generally endowed with no hereditary advantage beyond an honorary precedence. A less obvious inference from the Scriptural accounts is that they seem to plant us on the traces of the breach which is first effected in the empire of the parent. The families of Jacob and Esau separate and form two nations; but the families of Jacob's children hold

together and become a people. This looks like the immature germ of a state or commonwealth, and of an order of rights superior to the claims of family relation.

If I were attempting for the more special purposes of the jurist to express compendiously the characteristics of the situation in which mankind disclose themselves at the dawn of their history, I should be satisfied to quote a few verses from the *Odyssey* of Homer: "They have neither assemblies for consultation nor *themistes*,<sup>1</sup> but every one exercises jurisdiction over his wives and his children, and they pay no regard to one another." These lines are applied to the Cyclops, and it may not perhaps be an altogether fanciful idea when I suggest that the Cyclops is Homer's type of an alien and less advanced civilisation; for the almost physical loathing which a primitive community feels for men of widely different manners from its own usually expresses itself by describing them as monsters, such as giants, or even (which is almost always the case in Oriental mythology) as demons. However that may be, the verses condense in themselves the sum of the hints which are given us by legal antiquities. Men are first seen distributed in perfectly insulated groups, held together by obedience to the parent. Law is the parent's word, but it is not yet in the condition of . . . *themistes*. . . . When we go forward to the state of society in which these early legal conceptions show themselves as formed, we find that they still partake of the mystery and spontaneity which must have seemed to characterise a despotic father's commands, but that at the same time, inasmuch as they proceed from a sovereign, they presuppose a union of family groups in some wider organisation. The next question is, what is the nature of this union and the degree of intimacy which it involves. It is just here that archaic law renders us one of the greatest of its services and fills up a gap which otherwise could only have been bridged by conjecture. It is full, in all its provinces, of the clearest indications that society in primitive times was not what it is assumed to be at present, a collection of *individuals*. In fact, and in the view of the men who composed it, it was *an aggregation of families*. The contrast may be most forcibly expressed by saying that the *unit* of an ancient society was the Family, of a modern society the Individual. We must be prepared to find in ancient law all the consequences of this difference. It is so framed as to be adjusted to a system of small independent corporations. It is therefore scanty, because it is

<sup>1</sup> [Earlier in this work Maine defines the *themistes* of archaic Greece as judgments which, though delivered by kings as judges, are conceived to be of divine origin and inspiration. The *themistes* depended upon some measure of civil and political organization within the tribe, which Homer felt to be absent among the Cyclops.]



supplemented by the despotic commands of the heads of households. It is ceremonious, because the transactions to which it pays regard resemble international concerns much more than the quick play of intercourse between individuals. Above all it has a peculiarity of which the full importance cannot be shown at present. It takes a view of *life* wholly unlike any which appears in developed jurisprudence. Corporations *never die*, and accordingly primitive law considers the entities with which it deals, i.e., the patriarchal or family groups, as perpetual and inextinguishable. This view is closely allied to the peculiar aspect under which, in very ancient times, moral attributes present themselves. The moral elevation and moral debasement of the individual appear to be confounded with, or postponed to, the merits and offences of the group to which the individual belongs. If the community sins, its guilt is much more than the sum of the offences committed by its members; the crime is a corporate act, and extends in its consequences to many more persons than have shared in its actual perpetration. If, on the other hand, the individual is conspicuously guilty, it is his children, his kinsfolk, his tribesmen, or his fellow-citizens, who suffer with him, and sometimes for him. It thus happens that the ideas of moral responsibility and retribution often seem to be more clearly realised at very ancient than at more advanced periods, for, as the family group is immortal, and its liability to punishment indefinite, the primitive mind is not perplexed by the questions which become troublesome as soon as the individual is conceived as altogether separate from the group. One step in the transition from the ancient and simple view of the matter to the theological or metaphysical explanations of later days is marked by the early Greek notion of an inherited curse. The bequest received by his posterity from the original criminal was not a liability to punishment, but a liability to the commission of fresh offences which drew with them a condign retribution; and thus the responsibility of the family was reconciled with the newer phase of thought which limited the consequences of crime to the person of the actual delinquent.

It would be a very simple explanation of the origin of society if we could base a general conclusion on the hint furnished us by the Scriptural example already adverted to, and could suppose that communities began to exist wherever a family held together instead of separating at the death of its patriarchal chieftain. In most of the Greek states and in Rome there long remained the vestiges of an ascending series of groups out of which the State was at first constituted. The Family, House, and Tribe of the Romans may be taken as the type of them, and they are so described to us that we

can scarcely help conceiving them as a system of concentric circles which have gradually expanded from the same point. The elementary group is the Family, connected by common subjection to the highest male ascendant. The aggregation of Families forms the Gens or House. The aggregation of Houses makes the Tribe. The aggregation of Tribes constitutes the Commonwealth. Are we at liberty to follow these indications, and to lay down that the commonwealth is a collection of persons united by common descent from the progenitor of an original family? Of this we may at least be certain, that all ancient societies regarded themselves as having proceeded from one original stock, and even laboured under an incapacity for comprehending any reason except this for their holding together in political union. The history of political ideas begins, in fact, with the assumption that kinship in blood is the sole possible ground of community in political functions; nor is there any of those subversions of feeling, which we term emphatically revolutions, so startling and so complete as the change which is accomplished when some other principle—such as that, for instance, of *local continuity*—establishes itself for the first time as the basis of common political action. It may be affirmed then of early commonwealths that their citizens considered all the groups in which they claimed membership to be founded on common lineage. What was obviously true of the Family was believed to be true first of the House, next of the Tribe, lastly of the State. And yet we find that along with this belief, or, if we may use the word, this theory, each community preserved records or traditions which distinctly showed that the fundamental assumption was false. Whether we look to the Greek states, or to Rome, or to the Teutonic aristocracies . . . or to the Celtic clan associations, or to that strange social organisation of the Slavonic Russians and Poles . . . everywhere we discover traces of passages in their history when men of alien descent were admitted to and amalgamated with, the original brotherhood. Adverting to Rome singly, we perceive that the primary group, the Family, was being constantly adulterated by the practice of adoption, while stories seem to have been always current respecting the exotic extraction of one of the original Tribes and concerning a large addition to the Houses made by one of the early kings. The composition of the state, uniformly assumed to be natural, was nevertheless known to be in great measure artificial. This conflict between belief or theory and notorious fact is at first sight extremely perplexing; but what it really illustrates is the efficiency with which Legal Fictions do their work in the infancy of society. The earliest and most extensively employed of legal fictions was that which permitted family relations to be created artificially, and there is none to

which I conceive mankind to be more deeply indebted. If it had never existed, I do not see how any one of the primitive groups, whatever were their nature, could have absorbed another, or on what terms any two of them could have combined, except those of absolute superiority on one side and absolute subjection on the other. No doubt, when with our modern ideas we contemplate the union of independent communities, we can suggest a hundred modes of carrying it out, the simplest of all being that the individuals comprised in the coalescing groups shall vote or act together according to local propinquity; but the idea that a number of persons should exercise political rights in common simply because they happened to live within the same topographical limits was utterly strange and monstrous to primitive antiquity. The expedient which in those times commanded favour was that the incoming population should *feign themselves* to be descended from the same stock as the people on whom they were engrafted; and it is precisely the good faith of this fiction, and the closeness with which it seemed to imitate reality, that we cannot now hope to understand. One circumstance, however, which it is important to recollect, is that the men who formed the various political groups were certainly in the habit of meeting together periodically, for the purpose of acknowledging and consecrating their association by common sacrifices. Strangers amalgamated with the brotherhood were doubtless admitted to these sacrifices; and when that was once done, we can believe that it seemed equally easy, or not more difficult, to conceive them as sharing in the common lineage. The conclusion then which is suggested by the evidence is, not that all early societies were formed by descent from the same ancestor, but that all of them which had any permanence and solidity either were so descended or assumed that they were. An indefinite number of causes may have shattered the primitive groups, but wherever their ingredients recombined, it was on the model or principle of an association of kindred. Whatever were the fact all thought, language, and law adjusted themselves to the assumption. But though all this seems to me to be established with reference to the communities with whose records we are acquainted, the remainder of their history sustains the position before laid down as to the essentially transient and terminable influence of the most powerful Legal Fictions. At some point of time—probably as soon as they felt themselves strong enough to resist extrinsic pressure—all these states ceased to recruit themselves by factitious extensions of consanguinity. They necessarily, therefore, became Aristocracies, in all cases where a fresh population from any cause collected around them which could put in no claim to community of origin. Their sternness in maintaining the central

principle of a system under which political rights were attainable on no terms whatever except connexion in blood, real or artificial, taught their inferiors another principle, which proved to be endowed with a far higher measure of vitality. This was the principle of *local contiguity*, now recognised everywhere as the condition of community in political functions. A new set of political ideas came at once into existence, which, being those of ourselves, our contemporaries, and in great measure of our ancestors, rather obscure our perception of the older theory which they vanquished and dethroned.

The Family then is the type of an archaic society in all the modifications which it was capable of assuming; but the family here spoken of is not exactly the family as understood by a modern. In order to reach the ancient conception we must give to our modern ideas an important extension and an important limitation. We must look on the family as constantly enlarged by the absorption of strangers within its circle, and we must try to regard the fiction of adoption as so closely simulating the reality of kinship that neither law nor opinion makes the slightest difference between a real and an adoptive connexion. On the other hand, the persons theoretically amalgamated into a family by their common descent are practically held together by common obedience to their highest living ascendant, the father, grandfather, or great-grandfather. The patriarchal authority of a chieftain is as necessary an ingredient in the notion of the family group as the fact (or assumed fact) of its having sprung from his loins; and hence we must understand that if there be any persons who, however truly included in the brotherhood by virtue of their blood-relationship, have nevertheless *de facto* withdrawn themselves from the empire of its ruler, they are always, in the beginnings of law, considered as lost to the family. It is this patriarchal aggregate—the modern family thus cut down on one side and extended on the other—which meets us on the threshold of primitive jurisprudence. Older probably than the State, the Tribe, and the House, it left traces of itself on private law long after the House and the Tribe had been forgotten, and long after consanguinity had ceased to be associated with the composition of States. It will be found to have stamped itself on all the great departments of jurisprudence, and may be detected, I think, as the true source of many of their most important and most durable characteristics. At the outset, the peculiarities of law in its most ancient state lead us irresistibly to the conclusion that it took precisely the same view of the family group which is taken of individual men by the systems of rights and duties now prevalent throughout Europe. There are societies open to our observation



at this very moment whose laws and usages can scarcely be explained unless they are supposed never to have emerged from this primitive condition; but in communities more fortunately circumstanced the fabric of jurisprudence fell gradually to pieces, and if we carefully observe the disintegration we shall perceive that it took place principally in those portions of each system which were most deeply affected by the primitive conception of the family. In one all-important instance, that of the Roman law, the change was effected so slowly, that from epoch to epoch we can observe the line and direction which it followed, and can even give some idea of the ultimate result to which it was tending. And, in pursuing this last inquiry, we need not suffer ourselves to be stopped by the imaginary barrier which separates the modern from the ancient world. For one effect of that mixture of refined Roman law with primitive barbaric usage, which is known to us by the deceptive name of feudalism, was to revive many features of archaic jurisprudence which had died out of the Roman world, so that the decomposition which had seemed to be over commenced again, and to some extent is still proceeding.

On a few systems of law the family organisation of the earliest society has left a plain and broad mark in the life-long authority of the Father or other ancestor over the person and property of his descendants, an authority which we may conveniently call by its later Roman name of *Patria Potestas*. No feature of the rudimentary associations of mankind is deposed to by a greater amount of evidence than this, and yet none seems to have disappeared so generally and so rapidly from the usages of advancing communities. Gaius, writing under the Antonines, describes the institution as distinctively Roman. It is true that, had he glanced across the Rhine or the Danube to those tribes of barbarians which were exciting the curiosity of some among his contemporaries, he would have seen examples of patriarchal power in its crudest form; and in the far East a branch of the same ethnical stock from which the Romans sprang was repeating their *Patria Potestas* in some of its most technical incidents. But among the races understood to be comprised within the Roman empire, Gaius could find none which exhibited an institution resembling the Roman "Power of the Father," except only the Asiatic *Galatæ*. There are reasons, indeed, as it seems to me, why the direct authority of the ancestor should, in the greater number of progressive societies, very shortly assume humbler proportions than belonged to it in their earliest state. The implicit obedience of rude men to their parent is doubtless a primary fact, which it would be absurd to explain away altogether by attributing to them any calculation of its advantages; but, at the

same time, if it is natural in the sons to obey the father, it is equally natural that they should look to him for superior strength or superior wisdom. Hence, when societies are placed under circumstances which cause an especial value to be attached to bodily and mental vigour, there is an influence at work which tends to confine the *Patria Potestas* to the cases where its possessor is actually skilful and strong. When we obtain our first glimpse of organised Hellenic society, it seems as if super-eminent wisdom would keep alive the father's power in persons whose bodily strength had decayed; but the relations of Ulysses and Laertes in the *Odyssey* appear to show that, where extraordinary valour and sagacity were united in the son, the father in the decrepitude of age was deposed from the headship of the family. In the mature Greek jurisprudence, the rule advances a few steps on the practice hinted at in the Homeric literature; and though very many traces of stringent family obligation remain, the direct authority of the parent is limited, as in European codes, to the nonage or minority of the children, or, in other words, to the period during which their mental and physical inferiority may always be presumed. The Roman law, however, with its remarkable tendency to innovate on ancient usage only just so far as the exigency of the commonwealth may require, preserves both the primeval institution and the natural limitation to which I conceive it to have been subject. In every relation of life in which the collective community might have occasion to avail itself of his wisdom and strength, for all purposes of counsel or of war, the *filius familias*, or Son under Power, was as free as his father. It was a maxim of Roman jurisprudence that the *Patria Potestas* did not extend to the *Jus Publicum*. Father and son voted together in the city, and fought side by side in the field; indeed, the son, as general, might happen to command the father, or, as magistrate, decide on his contracts and punish his delinquencies. But in all the relations created by Private Law, the son lived under a domestic despotism which, considering the severity it retained to the last, and the number of centuries through which it endured, constitutes one of the strangest problems in legal history.

The *Patria Potestas* of the Romans, which is necessarily our type of the primeval paternal authority, is equally difficult to understand as an institution of civilised life, whether we consider its incidence on the person or its effects on property. It is to be regretted that a chasm which exists in its history cannot be more completely filled. So far as regards the person, the parent, when our information commences, has over his children the *jus vitæ necisque*, the power of life and death, and *à fortiori* of uncontrolled corporal chastisement; he can modify their personal condition at pleasure; he can give

a wife to his son; he can give his daughter in marriage; he can divorce his children of either sex; he can transfer them to another family by adoption; and he can sell them. Late in the Imperial period we find vestiges of all these powers, but they are reduced within very narrow limits. The unqualified right of domestic chastisement has become a right of bringing domestic offences under the cognisance of the civil magistrate; the privilege of dictating marriage has declined into a conditional veto; the liberty of selling has been virtually abolished, and adoption itself, destined to lose almost all its ancient importance in the reformed system of Justinian, can no longer be effected without the assent of the child transferred to the adoptive parentage. In short, we are brought very close to the verge of the ideas which have at length prevailed in the modern world. But between these widely distant epochs there is an interval of obscurity, and we can only guess at the causes which permitted the *Patria Potestas* to last as long as it did by rendering it more tolerable than it appears. The active discharge of the most important among the duties which the son owed to the state must have tempered the authority of his parent if they did not annul it. We can readily persuade ourselves that the paternal despotism could not be brought into play without great scandal against a man of full age occupying a high civil office. During the earlier history, however, such cases of practical emancipation would be rare compared with those which must have been created by the constant wars of the Roman republic. The military tribune and the private soldier who were in the field three quarters of a year during the earlier contests, at a later period the proconsul in charge of a province, and the legionaries who occupied it, cannot have had practical reason to regard themselves as the slaves of a despotic master; and all these avenues of escape tended constantly to multiply themselves. Victories led to conquests, conquests to occupations; the mode of occupation by colonies was exchanged for the system of occupying provinces by standing armies. Each step in advance was a call for the expatriation of more Roman citizens and a fresh draft on the blood of the failing Latin race. We may infer, I think, that a strong sentiment in favour of the relaxation of the *Patria Potestas* had become fixed by the time that the pacification of the world commenced on the establishment of the Empire. The first serious blows at the ancient institution are attributed to the earlier Cæsars, and some isolated interferences of Trajan and Hadrian seem to have prepared the ground for a series of express enactments which, though we cannot always determine their dates, we know to have limited the father's powers on the one hand, and on the other to have multiplied facilities for their voluntary surrender. The older mode of getting rid of the

Potestas, by effecting a triple sale of the son's person, is evidence, I may remark, of a very early feeling against the unnecessary prolongation of the powers. The rule which declared that the son should be free after having been three times sold by his father seems to have been originally meant to entail penal consequences on a practice which revolted even the imperfect morality of the primitive Roman. But even before the publication of the Twelve Tables it had been turned, by the ingenuity of the jurisconsults, into an expedient for destroying the parental authority wherever the father desired that it should cease.

Many of the causes which helped to mitigate the stringency of the father's power over the persons of his children are doubtless among those which do not lie upon the face of history. We cannot tell how far public opinion may have paralysed an authority which the law conferred, or how far natural affection may have rendered it endurable. But though the powers over the *person* may have been latterly nominal, the whole tenour of the extant Roman jurisprudence suggests that the father's rights over the son's *property* were always exercised without scruple to the full extent to which they were sanctioned by law. There is nothing to astonish us in the latitude of these rights when they first show themselves. The ancient law of Rome forbade the Children under Power to hold property apart from their parent, or (we should rather say) never contemplated the possibility of their claiming a separate ownership. The father was entitled to take the whole of the son's acquisitions, and to enjoy the benefit of his contracts without being entangled in any compensating liability. So much as this we should expect from the constitution of the earliest Roman society, for we can hardly form a notion of the primitive family group unless we suppose that its members brought their earnings of all kinds into the common stock while they were unable to bind it by improvident individual engagements. The true enigma of the Patria Potestas does not reside here, but in the slowness with which these proprietary privileges of the parent were curtailed, and in the circumstance that, before they were seriously diminished, the whole civilised world was brought within their sphere. No innovation of any kind was attempted till the first years of the Empire, when the acquisitions of soldiers on service were withdrawn from the operation of the Patria Potestas, doubtless as part of the reward of the armies which had overthrown the free commonwealth. Three centuries afterwards the same immunity was extended to the earnings of persons who were in the civil employment of the state. Both changes were obviously limited in their application, and they were so contrived in technical form as to interfere as little as possible with the principle of Patria



Potestas. A certain qualified and dependent ownership had always been recognised by the Roman law in the perquisites and savings which slaves and sons under power were not compelled to include in the household accounts, and the special name of this permissive property, *Peculium*, was applied to the acquisitions newly relieved from *Patria Potestas*, which were called in the case of soldiers *Castrense Peculium*, and *Quasi-castrense Peculium* in the case of civil servants. Other modifications of the parental privileges followed, which showed a less studious outward respect for the ancient principle. Shortly after the introduction of the *Quasi-castrense Peculium*, Constantine the Great took away the father's absolute control over property which his children had inherited from their mother, and reduced it to a *usufruct*, or life-interest. A few more changes of slight importance followed in the Western Empire, but the furthest point reached was in the East, under Justinian, who enacted that unless the acquisitions of the child were derived from the parent's own property, the parent's rights over them should not extend beyond enjoying their produce for the period of his life. Even this, the utmost relaxation of the Roman *Patria Potestas*, left it far ampler and severer than any analogous institution of the modern world. The earliest modern writers on jurisprudence remark that it was only the fiercer and ruder of the conquerors of the empire, and notably the nations of Slavonic origin, which exhibited a *Patria Potestas* at all resembling that which was described in the *Pandects* and the *Code*. All the Germanic immigrants seem to have recognised a corporate union of the family under the *mund*, or authority of a patriarchal chief; but his powers are obviously only the relics of a decayed *Patria Potestas*, and fell far short of those enjoyed by the Roman father. The Franks are particularly mentioned as not having the Roman Institution, and accordingly the old French lawyers, even when most busily engaged in filling the interstices of barbarous custom with rules of Roman law, were obliged to protect themselves against the intrusion of the *Potestas* by the express maxim, *Puissance de père en France n' a lieu*.<sup>2</sup> The tenacity of the Romans in maintaining this relic of their most ancient condition is in itself remarkable, but it is less remarkable than the diffusion of the *Potestas* over the whole of a civilisation from which it had once disappeared. While the *Castrense Peculium* constituted as yet the sole exception to the father's power over property, and while his power over his children's persons was still extensive, the Roman citizenship, and with it the *Patria Potestas*, were spreading into every corner of the empire. Every African or Spaniard, every Gaul, Briton, or Jew, who received this honour

<sup>2</sup> [*Paternalistic authority does not hold in France.*]

by gift, purchase, or inheritance, placed himself under the Roman Law of Persons, and, though our authorities intimate that children born before the acquisition of citizenship could not be brought under Power against their will, children born after it and all ulterior descendants were on the ordinary footing of a Roman *filius familias*. It does not fall within the province of this treatise to examine the mechanism of the later Roman society, but I may be permitted to remark that there is little foundation for the opinion which represents the constitution of Antoninus Caracalla conferring Roman citizenship on the whole of his subjects as a measure of small importance. However we may interpret it, it must have enormously enlarged the sphere of the Patria Potestas, and it seems to me that the tightening of family relations which it effected is an agency which ought to be kept in view more than it has been, in accounting for the great moral revolution which was transforming the world.

Before this branch of our subject is dismissed, it should be observed that the Paterfamilias was answerable for the delicts (or *torts*) of his Sons under Power. He was similarly liable for the torts of his slaves; but in both cases he originally possessed the singular privilege of tendering the delinquent's person in full satisfaction of the damage. The responsibility thus incurred on behalf of sons, coupled with the mutual incapacity of Parent and Child under Power to sue one another, has seemed to some jurists to be best explained by the assumption of a "unity of person" between the Pater-familias and the Filius-familias. . . . [These] responsibilities of the Paterfamilias, and other legal phenomena . . . appear to me to point at certain *duties* of the primitive Patriarchal chieftain which balanced his *rights*. I conceive that, if he disposed absolutely of the persons and fortune of his clansmen, this representative ownership was coextensive with a liability to provide for all members of the brotherhood out of the common fund. The difficulty is to throw ourselves out of our habitual associations sufficiently for conceiving the nature of his obligation. It was not a legal duty, for law had not yet penetrated into the precinct of the Family. To call it *moral* is perhaps to anticipate the ideas belonging to a later stage of mental development; but the expression "moral obligation" is significant enough for our purpose, if we understand by it a duty semi-consciously followed and enforced rather by instinct and habit than by definite sanctions.

The Patria Potestas, in its normal shape, has not been, and, as it seems to me, could not have been, a generally durable institution. The proof of its former universality is therefore incomplete so long as we consider it by itself; but the demonstration may be carried much further by examining

other departments of ancient law which depend on it ultimately, but not by a thread of connexion visible in all its parts or to all eyes. Let us turn for example to Kinship, or in other words, to the scale on which the proximity of relatives to each other is calculated in archaic jurisprudence. Here again it will be convenient to employ the Roman terms, Agnatic and Cognatic relationship. *Cognatic* relationship is simply the conception of kinship familiar to modern ideas; it is the relationship arising through common descent from the same pair of married persons, whether the descent be traced through males or females. *Agnatic* relationship is something very different: it excludes a number of persons whom we in our day should certainly consider of kin to ourselves, and it includes many more whom we should never reckon among our kindred. It is in truth the connexion existing between the members of the Family, conceived as it was in the most ancient times. The limits of this connexion are far from conterminous with those of modern relationship.

Cognates then are all those persons who can trace their blood to a single ancestor and ancestress; or, if we take the strict technical meaning of the word in Roman law, they are all who trace their blood to the legitimate marriage of a common pair. "Cognition" is therefore a relative term, and the degree of connexion in blood which it indicates depends on the particular marriage which is selected as the commencement of the calculation. If we begin with marriage of father and mother, Cognition will only express the relationship of brothers and sisters; if we take that of the grandfather and grandmother, then uncles, aunts, and their descendants will also be included in the notion of Cognition, and following the same process a larger number of Cognates may be continually obtained by choosing the starting point higher and higher up in the line of ascent. All this is easily understood by a modern; but who are the Agnates? In the first place, they are all the Cognates who trace their connexion exclusively through males. A table of Cognates is, of course, formed by taking each lineal ancestor in turn and including all his descendants of both sexes in the tabular view; if then, in tracing the various branches of such a genealogical table or tree, we stop whenever we come to the name of a female and pursue that particular branch or ramification no further, all who remain after the descendants of women have been excluded are Agnates, and their connexion together is Agnatic Relationship. I dwell a little on the process which is practically followed in separating them from the Cognates, because it explains a memorable legal maxim, "*Mulier est finis familiæ*"—a woman is the terminus of the family. A female name closes the branch or twig of the

genealogy in which it occurs. None of the descendants of a female are included in the primitive notion of family relationship.

If the system of archaic law at which we are looking be one which admits Adoption, we must add to the Agnates thus obtained all persons, male or female, who have been brought into the Family by the artificial extension of its boundaries. But the descendants of such persons will only be Agnates, if they satisfy the conditions which have just been described.

What then is the reason of this arbitrary inclusion and exclusion? Why should a conception of Kinship, so elastic as to include strangers brought into the family by adoption, be nevertheless so narrow as to shut out the descendants of a female member? To solve these questions, we must recur to the *Patria Potestas*. The foundation of Agnation is not the marriage of Father and Mother, but the authority of the Father. All persons are Agnatically connected together who are under the same Paternal Power, or who have been under it, or who might have been under it if their lineal ancestor had lived long enough to exercise his empire. In truth, in the primitive view, Relationship is exactly limited by *Patria Potestas*. Where the *Potestas* begins, Kinship begins; and therefore adoptive relatives are among the kindred. Where the *Potestas* ends, Kinship ends; so that a son emancipated by his father loses all rights of Agnation. And here we have the reason why the descendants of females are outside the limits of archaic kinship. If a woman died unmarried, she could have no legitimate descendants. If she married, her children fell under the *Patria Potestas*, not of her Father, but of her Husband, and thus were lost to her own family. It is obvious that the organisation of primitive societies would have been confounded, if men had called themselves relatives of their mother's relatives. The inference would have been that a person might be subject to two distinct *Patriæ Potestates*; but distinct *Patriæ Potestates* implied distinct jurisdictions, so that anybody amenable to two of them at the same time would have lived under two different dispensations. As long as the Family was an *imperium in imperio*, a community within the commonwealth, governed by its own institutions of which the parent was the source, the limitation of relationship to the Agnates was a necessary security against a conflict of laws in the domestic forum.

The Parental Powers proper are extinguished by the death of the Parent, but Agnation is as it were a mould which retains their imprint after they have ceased to exist. Hence comes the interest of Agnation for the inquirer into the history of jurisprudence. The Powers themselves are discernible in comparatively few monuments of ancient law, but Agnatic Relationship,



which implies their former existence, is discoverable almost everywhere. There are few indigenous bodies of law belonging to communities of the Indo-European stock, which do not exhibit peculiarities in the most ancient part of their structure which are clearly referable to Agnation. In Hindoo law, for example, which is saturated with the primitive notions of family dependency, kinship is entirely Agnatic, and I am informed that in Hindoo genealogies the names of women are generally omitted altogether. The same view of relationship pervades so much of the laws of the races who overran the Roman Empire as appears to have really formed part of their primitive usage, and we may suspect that it would have perpetuated itself even more than it has in modern European jurisprudence, if it had not been for the vast influence of the later Roman law on modern thought. The Prætors early laid hold on Cognation as the *natural* form of kinship, and spared no pains in purifying their system from the older conception. Their ideas have descended to us, but still traces of Agnation are to be seen in many of the modern rules of succession after death. The exclusion of females and their children from governmental functions, commonly attributed to the usage of the Salian Franks, has certainly an agnatic origin, being descended from the ancient German rule of succession to allodial property. In Agnation too is to be sought the explanation of that extraordinary rule of English Law, only recently repealed, which prohibited brothers of the half-blood from succeeding to one another's lands. In the Customs of Normandy, the rule applies to *uterine* brothers only, that is, to brothers by the same mother but not by the same father; and, limited in this way, it is a strict deduction from the system of Agnation, under which uterine brothers are no relations at all to one another. When it was transplanted to England, the English judges, who had no clue to its principle, interpreted it as a general prohibition against the succession of the half-blood, and extended it to *consanguineous* brothers, that is to sons of the same father by different wives. In all the literature which enshrines the pretended philosophy of law, there is nothing more curious than the pages of elaborate sophistry in which Blackstone attempts to explain and justify the exclusion of the half-blood.

It may be shown, I think, that the Family, as held together by the *Patria Potestas*, is the nidus out of which the entire Law of Persons has germinated. Of all the chapters of that Law the most important is that which is concerned with the status of Females. It has just been stated that Primitive Jurisprudence, though it does not allow a Woman to communicate any rights of Agnation to her descendants, includes herself nevertheless in the

Agnatic bond. Indeed, the relation of a female to the family in which she was born is much stricter, closer, and more durable than that which unites her male kinsmen. We have several times laid down that early law takes notice of Families only; this is the same thing as saying that it only takes notice of persons exercising *Patria Potestas*, and accordingly the only principle on which it enfranchises a son or grandson at the death of his Parent, is a consideration of the capacity inherent in such son or grandson to become himself the head of a new family and the root of a new set of Parental Powers. But a woman, of course, has no capacity of the kind, and no title accordingly to the liberation which it confers. There is therefore a peculiar contrivance of archaic jurisprudence for retaining her in the bondage of the Family for life. This is the institution known to the oldest Roman law as the Perpetual Tutelage of Women, under which a Female, though relieved from her Parent's authority by his decease, continues subject through life to her nearest male relations as her Guardians. Perpetual Guardianship is obviously neither more nor less than an artificial prolongation of the *Patria Potestas*, when for other purposes it has been dissolved. In India, the system survives in absolute completeness, and its operation is so strict that a Hindoo Mother frequently becomes the ward of her own sons. Even in Europe, the laws of the Scandinavian nations respecting women preserved it until quite recently. The invaders of the Western Empire had it universally among their indigenous usages, and indeed their ideas on the subject of Guardianship, in all its forms, were among the most retrogressive of those which they introduced into the Western world. But from the mature Roman jurisprudence it had entirely disappeared. We should know almost nothing about it, if we had only the compilations of Justinian to consult; but the discovery of the manuscript of Gaius discloses it to us at a most interesting epoch, just when it had fallen into complete discredit and was verging on extinction. The great jurisconsult himself scouts the popular apology offered for it in the mental inferiority of the female sex, and a considerable part of his volume is taken up with descriptions of the numerous expedients, some of them displaying extraordinary ingenuity, which the Roman lawyers had devised for enabling Women to defeat the ancient rules. Led by their theory of Natural Law, the jurisconsults had evidently at this time assumed the equality of the sexes as a principle of their code of equity. The restrictions which they attacked were, it is to be observed, restrictions on the disposition of property, for which the assent of the woman's guardians was still formally required. Control of her person was apparently quite obsolete.

Ancient law subordinates the woman to her blood-relations, while a prime phenomenon of modern jurisprudence has been her subordination to her husband. The history of the change is remarkable. It begins far back in the annals of Rome. Anciently, there were three modes in which marriage might be contracted according to Roman usage, one involving a religious solemnity, the other two the observance of certain secular formalities. By the religious marriage or *Confarreation*; by the higher form of civil marriage, which was called *Coemption*; and by the lower form, which was termed *Usus*, the Husband acquired a number of rights over the person and property of his wife, which were on the whole in excess of such as are conferred on him in any system of modern jurisprudence. But in what capacity did he acquire them? Not as *Husband*, but as *Father*. By the *Confarreation*, *Coemption*, and *Usus*, the woman passed *in manum viri*, that is, in law she became the *Daughter* of her husband. She was included in his *Patria Potestas*. She incurred all the liabilities springing out of it while it subsisted, and surviving it when it had expired. All her property became absolutely his, and she was retained in tutelage after his death to the guardian whom he had appointed by will. These three ancient forms of marriage fell, however, gradually into disuse, so that, at the most splendid period of Roman greatness, they had almost entirely given place to a fashion of wedlock—old apparently, but not hitherto considered reputable—which was founded on a modification of the lower form of civil marriage. Without explaining the technical mechanism of the institution now generally popular, I may describe it as amounting in law to little more than a temporary deposit of the woman by her family. The rights of the family remained unimpaired, and the lady continued in the tutelage of guardians whom her parents had appointed and whose privileges of control overrode, in many material respects, the inferior authority of her husband. The consequence was that the situation of the Roman female, whether married or unmarried, became one of great personal and proprietary independence, for the tendency of the later law, as I have already hinted, was to reduce the power of the guardian to a nullity, while the form of marriage in fashion conferred on the husband no compensating superiority. But Christianity tended somewhat from the very first to narrow this remarkable liberty. Led at first by justifiable disrelish for the loose practices of the decaying heathen world, but afterwards hurried on by a passion of asceticism, the professors of the new faith looked with disfavour on a marital tie which was in fact the laxest the Western world has seen. The latest Roman law, so far as it is touched by the Constitutions of the Christian Emperors, bears some marks

of a reaction against the liberal doctrines of the great Antonine juriconsults. And the prevalent state of religious sentiment may explain why it is that modern jurisprudence, forged in the furnace of barbarian conquest, and formed by the fusion of Roman jurisprudence with patriarchal usage, has absorbed, among its rudiments, much more than usual of those rules concerning the position of women which belong peculiarly to an imperfect civilisation. During the troubled era which begins modern history, and while the laws of the Germanic and Slavonic immigrants remained superposed like a separate layer above the Roman jurisprudence of their provincial subjects, the women of the dominant races are seen everywhere under various forms of archaic guardianship, and the husband who takes a wife from any family except his own pays a money-price to her relations for the tutelage which they surrender to him. When we move onwards, and the code of the middle ages has been formed by the amalgamation of the two systems, the law relating to women carries the stamp of its double origin. The principle of the Roman jurisprudence is so far triumphant that unmarried females are generally (though there are local exceptions to the rule) relieved from the bondage of the family; but the archaic principle of the barbarians has fixed the position of married women, and the husband has drawn to himself in his marital character the powers which had once belonged to his wife's male kindred, the only difference being that he no longer purchases his privileges. At this point therefore the modern law of Western and Southern Europe begins to be distinguished by one of its chief characteristics, the comparative freedom it allows to unmarried women and widows, the heavy disabilities it imposes on wives. It was very long before the subordination entailed on the other sex by marriage was sensibly diminished. The principal and most powerful solvent of the revived barbarism of Europe was always the codified jurisprudence of Justinian, wherever it was studied with that passionate enthusiasm which it seldom failed to awaken. It covertly but most efficaciously undermined the customs which it pretended merely to interpret. But the Chapter of law relating to married women was for the most part read by the light, not of Roman, but of Canon Law, which in no one particular departs so widely from the spirit of the secular jurisprudence as in the view it takes of the relations created by marriage. This was in part inevitable, since no society which preserves any tincture of Christian institution is likely to restore to married women the personal liberty conferred on them by the middle Roman law, but the proprietary disabilities of married females stand on quite a different basis from their personal incapacities, and it is by keeping alive and consolidat-



ing the former that the expositors of the Canon Law have deeply injured civilisation. There are many vestiges of a struggle between the secular and ecclesiastical principles, but the Canon Law nearly everywhere prevailed. In some of the French provinces married women, of a rank below nobility, obtained all the powers of dealing with property which Roman jurisprudence had allowed, and this local law has been largely followed by the Code Napoleon; but the state of the Scottish law shows that scrupulous deference to the doctrines of the Roman juriconsults did not always extend to mitigating the disabilities of wives. The systems however which are least indulgent to married women are invariably those which have followed the Canon Law exclusively, or those which, from the lateness of their contact with European civilisation, have never had their archaisms weeded out. The Scandinavian laws, harsh till lately to all females, are still remarkable for their severity to wives. And scarcely less stringent in the proprietary incapacities it imposes is the English Common Law, which borrows far the greatest number of its fundamental principles from the jurisprudence of the Canonists. . . . I do not know how the operation and nature of the ancient *Patria Potestas* can be brought so vividly before the mind as by reflecting on the prerogatives attached to the husband by the pure English Common Law, and by recalling the rigorous consistency with which the view of a complete legal subjection on the part of the wife is carried by it, where it is untouched by equity or statutes, through every department of rights, duties, and remedies. The distance between the eldest and latest Roman law on the subject of Children under Power may be considered as equivalent to the difference between the Common Law and the jurisprudence of the Court of Chancery in the rules which they respectively apply to wives.

If we were to lose sight of the true origin of Guardianship in both its forms and were to employ the common language on these topics, we should find ourselves remarking that, while the Tutelage of Women is an instance in which systems of archaic law push to an extravagant length the fiction of suspended rights, the rules which they lay down for the Guardianship of Male Orphans are an example of a fault in precisely the opposite direction. All such systems terminate the Tutelage of males at an extraordinarily early period. Under the ancient Roman law, which may be taken as their type, the son who was delivered from *Patria Potestas* by the death of his Father or Grandfather remained under guardianship till an epoch which for general purposes may be described as arriving with his fifteenth year; but the arrival of that epoch placed him at once in the full enjoyment of personal and proprietary independence. The period of minority appears there-

fore to have been as unreasonably short as the duration of the disabilities of women was preposterously long. But, in point of fact, there was no element either of excess or of shortcoming in the circumstances which gave their original form to the two kinds of guardianship. Neither the one nor the other of them was based on the slightest consideration of public or private convenience. The guardianship of male orphans was no more designed originally to shield them till the arrival of years of discretion than the tutelage of women was intended to protect the other sex against its own feebleness. The reason why the death of the father delivered the son from the bondage of the family was the son's capacity for becoming himself the head of a new family and the founder of a new *Patria Potestas*; no such capacity was possessed by the woman and therefore she was *never* enfranchised. Accordingly the Guardianship of Male Orphans was a contrivance for keeping alive the semblance of subordination to the family of the Parent, up to the time when the child was supposed capable of becoming a parent himself. It was a prolongation of the *Patria Potestas* up to the period of bare physical manhood. It ended with puberty, for the rigour of the theory demanded that it should do so. Inasmuch, however, as it did not profess to conduct the orphan ward to the age of intellectual maturity or fitness for affairs, it was quite unequal to the purposes of general convenience; and this the Romans seem to have discovered at a very early stage of their social progress. One of the very oldest monuments of Roman legislation is the *Lex Lætoria* or *Plætoria* which placed all free males who were of full years and rights under the temporary control of a new class of guardians, called *Curatores*, whose sanction was required to validate their acts or contracts. The twenty-sixth year of the young man's age was the limit of this statutory supervision; and it is exclusively with reference to the age of twenty-five that the terms "majority" and "minority" are employed in Roman law. *Pupilage* or *wardship* in modern jurisprudence had adjusted itself with tolerable regularity to the simple principle of protection to the immaturity of youth both bodily and mental. It has its natural termination with years of discretion. But for protection against physical weakness and for protection against intellectual incapacity, the Romans looked to two different institutions, distinct both in theory and design. The ideas attendant on both are combined in the modern idea of guardianship.

The Law of Persons contains but one other chapter which can be usefully cited for our present purpose. The legal rules by which systems of mature jurisprudence regulate the connection of *Master and Slave*, present no very distinct traces of the original condition common to ancient societies. But there are reasons for this exception. There seems to be something in the institution

of Slavery which has at all times either shocked or perplexed mankind, however little habituated to reflection, and however slightly advanced in the cultivation of its moral instincts. The compunction which ancient communities almost unconsciously experienced appears to have always resulted in the adoption of some imaginary principle upon which a defence, or at least a rationale, of slavery could be plausibly founded. Very early in their history the Greeks explained the institution as grounded on the intellectual inferiority of certain races and their consequent natural aptitude for the servile condition. The Romans, in a spirit equally characteristic, derived it from a supposed agreement between the victor and the vanquished in which the first stipulated for the perpetual services of his foe; and the other gained in consideration the life which he had legitimately forfeited. Such theories were not only unsound but plainly unequal to the case for which they affected to account. Still they exercised powerful influence in many ways. They satisfied the conscience of the Master. They perpetuated and probably increased the debasement of the Slave. And they naturally tended to put out of sight the relation in which servitude had originally stood to the rest of the domestic system. The relation, though not clearly exhibited, is casually indicated in many parts of primitive law, and more particularly in the typical system—that of ancient Rome.

Much industry and some learning have been bestowed in the United States of America on the question whether the Slave was in the early stages of society a recognised member of the Family. There is a sense in which an affirmative answer must certainly be given. It is clear, from the testimony both of ancient law and of many primeval histories, that the Slave might under certain conditions be made the Heir, or Universal Successor, of the Master, and this significant faculty . . . implies that the government and representation of the Family might, in a particular state of circumstances, devolve on the bondman. It seems, however, to be assumed in the American arguments on the subject that, if we allow Slavery to have been a primitive Family institution, the acknowledgment is pregnant with an admission of the moral defensibility of Negro-servitude at the present moment. What then is meant by saying that the Slave was originally included in the Family? Not that his situation may not have been the fruit of the coarsest motives which can actuate man. The simple wish to use the bodily powers of another person as a means of ministering to one's own ease or pleasure is doubtless the foundation of Slavery, and as old as human nature. When we speak of the Slave as anciently included in the Family, we intend to assert nothing as to the motives of those who brought him into it or kept him there; we merely

imply that the tie which bound him to his master was regarded as one of the same general character with that which united every other member of the group to its chieftain. This consequence is, in fact, carried in the general assertion already made that the primitive ideas of mankind were unequal to comprehending any basis of the connection *inter se* of individuals, apart from the relations of family. The Family consisted primarily of those who belonged to it by consanguinity and next of those who had been engrafted on it by adoption; but there was still a third class of persons who were only joined to it by common subjection to its head, and these were the Slaves. The born and the adopted subjects of the chief were raised above the Slave by the certainty that in the ordinary course of events they would be relieved from bondage and entitled to exercise powers of their own; but that the inferiority of the Slave was not such as to place him outside the pale of the Family, or such as to degrade him to the footing of inanimate property, is clearly proved, I think, by the many traces which remain of his ancient capacity for inheritance in the last resort. It would, of course, be unsafe in the highest degree to hazard conjectures how far the lot of the Slave was mitigated, in the beginnings of society, by having a definite place reserved to him in the empire of the Father. It is, perhaps, more probable that the son was practically assimilated to the Slave, than that the Slave shared any of the tenderness which in later times was shown to the son. But it may be asserted with some confidence of advanced and matured codes that, wherever servitude is sanctioned, the Slave has uniformly greater advantages under systems which preserve some memento of his earlier condition than under those which have adopted some other theory of his civil degradation. The point of view from which jurisprudence regards the Slave is always of great importance to him. The Roman law was arrested in its growing tendency to look upon him more and more as an article of property by the theory of the Law of Nature; and hence it is that, wherever servitude is sanctioned by institutions which have been deeply affected by Roman jurisprudence, the servile condition is never intolerably wretched. There is a great deal of evidence that in those American States which have taken the highly Romanised code of Louisiana as the basis of their jurisprudence, the lot and prospects of the negro-population are better in many material respects than under institutions founded on the English Common Law, which, as recently interpreted, has no true place for the Slave, and can only therefore regard him as a chattel.

We have now examined all parts of the ancient Law of Persons which fall within the scope of this treatise, and the result of the inquiry is, I trust,



to give additional definiteness and precision to our view of the infancy of jurisprudence. The Civil laws of States first make their appearance as the Themistes of a patriarchal sovereign, and we can now see that these Themistes are probably only a developed form of the irresponsible commands which, in a still earlier condition of the race, the head of each isolated household may have addressed to his wives, his children, and his slaves. But, even after the State has been organised, the laws have still an extremely limited application. Whether they retain their primitive character as Themistes, or whether they advance to the condition of Customs or Codified Texts, they are binding not on individuals, but on Families. Ancient jurisprudence, if a perhaps deceptive comparison may be employed, may be likened to International Law, filling nothing, as it were, excepting the interstices between the great groups which are the atoms of society. In a community so situated, the legislation of assemblies and the jurisdiction of Courts reaches only to the heads of families, and to every other individual the rule of conduct is the law of his home, of which his Parent is the legislator. But the sphere of civil law, small at first, tends steadily to enlarge itself. The agents of legal change, Fictions, Equity, and Legislation, are brought in turn to bear on the primeval institutions, and at every point of the progress, a greater number of personal rights and a larger amount of property are removed from the domestic forum to the cognizance of the public tribunals. The ordinances of the government obtain gradually the same efficacy in private concerns as in matters of state, and are no longer liable to be overridden by the behests of a despot enthroned by each hearthstone. We have in the annals of Roman law a nearly complete history of the crumbling away of an archaic system, and of the formation of new institutions from the recombined materials, institutions some of which descended unimpaired to the modern world, while others, destroyed or corrupted by contact with barbarism in the dark ages, had again to be recovered by mankind. When we leave this jurisprudence at the epoch of its final reconstruction by Justinian, few traces of archaism can be discovered in any part of it except in the single article of the extensive powers still reserved to the living Parent. Everywhere else principles of convenience, or of symmetry, or of simplification—new principles at any rate—have usurped the authority of the jejune considerations which satisfied the conscience of ancient times. Everywhere a new morality has displaced the canons of conduct and the reasons of acquiescence which were in unison with the ancient usages, because in fact they were born of them.

The movement of the progressive societies has been uniform in one re-

spect. Through all its course it has been distinguished by the gradual dissolution of family dependency and the growth of individual obligation in its place. The Individual is steadily substituted for the Family, as the unit of which civil laws take account. The advance has been accomplished at varying rates of celerity, and there are societies not absolutely stationary in which the collapse of the ancient organisation can only be perceived by careful study of the phenomena they present. But, whatever its pace, the change has not been subject to reaction or recoil, and apparent retardations will be found to have been occasioned through the absorption of archaic ideas and customs from some entirely foreign source. Nor is it difficult to see what is the tie between man and man which replaces by degrees those forms of reciprocity in rights and duties which have their origin in the Family. It is Contract. Starting, as from one terminus of history, from a condition of society in which all the relations of Persons are summed up in the relations of Family, we seem to have steadily moved towards a phase of social order in which all these relations arise from the free agreement of Individuals. In Western Europe the progress achieved in this direction has been considerable. Thus the status of the Slave has disappeared—it has been superseded by the contractual relation of the servant to his master. The status of the Female under Tutelage, if the tutelage be understood of persons other than her husband, has also ceased to exist; from her coming of age to her marriage all the relations she may form are relations of contract. So too the status of the Son under Power has no true place in the law of modern European societies. If any civil obligation binds together the Parent and the child of full age, it is one to which only contract gives its legal validity. The apparent exceptions are exceptions of that stamp which illustrate the rule. The child before years of discretion, the orphan under guardianship, the adjudged lunatic, have all their capacities and incapacities regulated by the Law of Persons. But why? The reason is differently expressed in the conventional language of different systems, but in substance it is stated to the same effect by all. The great majority of Jurists are constant to the principle that the classes of persons just mentioned are subject to extrinsic control on the single ground that they do not possess the faculty of forming a judgment on their own interests; in other words, that they are wanting in the first essential of an engagement by Contract.

The word Status may be usefully employed to construct a formula expressing the law of progress thus indicated, which, whatever be its value, seems to me to be sufficiently ascertained. All the forms of Status taken notice of in the Law of Persons were derived from, and to some extent

are still coloured by, the powers and privileges anciently residing in the Family. If then we employ Status, agreeably with the usage of the best writers, to signify these personal conditions only, and avoid applying the term to such conditions as are the immediate or remote result of agreement, we may say that the movement of the progressive societies has hitherto been a movement *from Status to Contract*.

## FERDINAND TÖNNIES

IN 1887, at the age of thirty-two, Ferdinand Tönnies published his celebrated study *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*; and though, in the remaining fifty-odd years of his life, he wrote and published a number of books and articles on sociology, methodology, and contemporary social and political problems, as well as important studies of Hobbes and Marx, no later work of his received the acclaim nor achieved the influence of his first publication. For *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* appeared at a crucial moment in German history and made a special appeal to German consciousness. The country had been undergoing, since about 1850, a rapid industrialization and a violent social transformation analogous in many ways to what England had gone through in the earlier decades of the same century. The shock of these changes reverberated throughout the entire nation, in urban and rural regions alike. As Germany's agrarian economy was caught up in the world-wide market economy, it was forced, at the same time, to produce the type of crops demanded by the new industries. Simultaneously, removal of antiquated restrictions on the movement of peasants from the land encouraged a general flow of population to the growing industrial centers. Tönnies, the son of a Schleswig peasant farmer, was sensitive to the widespread spirit of social dislocation which accompanied the disappearance of an old order of small landholders and simple commodity production, and its replacement by an industrial system of generalized production. His book was a dramatic juxtaposition and an invidious comparison of the two types of society, as well as a systematic application of the concepts of *Gemeinschaft* (a "community" of mutual aid, trust, and interdependence) and *Gesellschaft*<sup>1</sup> (a "society" where self-interest is the dominant consideration) to all social relations. Yet in it Tönnies tended to idealize the old order at the expense of the new, to present the former as animated by a spirit of brotherly love and fellow-feeling absent in the latter. The book gained its initial reputation because it romanticized the past. Conservatives, antagonistic to industry and democracy, defended it; liberals and socialists, favorably disposed to these institutions, rejected it. Tönnies' later works, which stressed the more positive traits of industrialism and the need for democratic control of it, succeeded only in alienating the conservative groups without reconciling the liberal ones, with the result that until his death in 1936, Tönnies remained a singularly isolated figure in his own country. He founded no schools and left no disciples, but his concepts influenced such thinkers as Max Weber and Émile Durkheim, both of whom used his concepts for their own ends. In the United States, R. M. MacIver (b. 1882) has acknowledged a debt to Tönnies for the notions of "community" and "association" which are basic to MacIver's own social theories.

The following selection has been taken from an article which Tönnies wrote for

<sup>1</sup> Although *Gemeinschaft* may be rendered as "community" and *Gesellschaft* as "society," the English words do not carry the overtones present in the German, nor do they denote the polarity of meaning which Tönnies imputed to them. Therefore they will be left in the text untranslated.



the *Handwörterbuch der Soziologie* (1931), and which was subsequently translated from the original German by Charles P. Loomis. It is a mature recapitulation of the thesis of his early study, *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*.



## GEMEINSCHAFT AND GESELLSCHAFT

### *I: Knowledge and Nonknowledge*

Sociology is the study of man, not of his bodily nor of his physical, but of his social nature. His bodily and physical being are considered only in so far as they condition his social nature. It is our purpose to study the sentiments and motives which draw people to each other, keep them together, and induce them to join action. We wish especially to investigate the products of human thought which, resulting therefrom, make possible and sustain a common existence. They find their consummation in such important forms as community, state, and church, which are often felt to be realities or even supernatural beings.

"*Nosce te ipsum*" (know yourself); if you want to understand others, look into your own heart. Every one of us has manifold relationships, direct and indirect, with other people. Every one of us knows many people, but only few in proportion to their total number. Thus the question arises, how do I know other people?

We shall first study the distinction between all people and those we know, without regard to the question as to how we come to know people. The distinction will head a list of four dichotomies dealing with one's relation to one's fellow beings. This distinction is:

1. *Acquaintanceship and Strangeness*. It is not necessary to do more than simply to indicate the great importance of this distinction. In a strange city one may by chance meet in a crowd of strangers an acquaintance, perhaps even a familiar acquaintance or at least an acquaintance of long standing. This is usually a pleasant experience. One is likely to strike up a conversation with him at once, something one is seldom inclined to do with a complete stranger. Often what little inclination one has to converse with strangers is impeded by a foreign language. If the individual is only a casual acquaintance, it may be the first (and possibly the last) time that one shakes hands

---

This selection has been reprinted from Ferdinand Tönnies, *Fundamental Concepts of Sociology* (pp. 3-29, Copyright 1940 by American Book Company, N.Y.) by permission of the publisher.

with him. Such a casual acquaintance may be a stranger except for the fact that he is known in some special capacity such as that of being engaged in the same profession or line of work; or it may be that the two persons have met once before and exchanged a few words. A casual acquaintance of mine may be a citizen of another country and have a different mother tongue, but he is known to me and is an acquaintance even if we had and still have difficulty in understanding each other. In the German language there is a subtle distinction between an acquaintance and a person whom one only "knows." An acquaintance, my acquaintance, knows me, too; someone whom I only know does not, in all probability, know me or, at least, will not necessarily know me. An individual occupying a high position is seen and known by many whom he himself overlooks, whom he does not know and very often does not wish to know. The person whom I know may not remember me or, even if he should, may not wish to take notice of me. I may not mean anything to him, or he may not like me. In contradistinction, an acquaintance is considered by many as being among their "friends." This may often be a sign of a superficial intellectual attitude or manner of speech, although, of course, acquaintanceship implies a slight tendency toward mutual approval just as strangeness implies a tendency toward mutual negation. This is, to be sure, only a tendency, but tendencies are important.

2. *Sympathy and Antipathy.* The fact that one knows a person or is acquainted with him does not necessarily imply that one likes him or is fond of him or (a rarer occurrence) loves him. There is, of course, tremendous difference between those who are congenial to us, and those whom we regard with antipathy. Sympathy and antipathy are feelings; they are often defined as instincts, that is, as something subhuman. In reality, they are frequently connected with thought and knowledge and thus with higher and nobler feelings which distinguish the human being. Indeed, they often spring from such feelings and from our thoughts and knowledge. A certain relationship of some significance exists, as has already been pointed out, between acquaintance and sympathy on the one hand and between strangeness and antipathy on the other. The more sympathy and antipathy are instinctive, the more they are related to outward appearance, especially where women are concerned. This holds true, above all, for the feeling resulting from the impression made upon them by the man. Such impression may be produced by his figure, his face and expression, his dress, his behavior, his manners, his way of speech, even the sound of his voice. Men, too, often fall in love with women at first sight. For some a beautiful figure, for

others a lovely face, is the decisive factor; for some it is the expression of the eyes alone or the polished way of speaking, for still others the elegant dress or the smart hat. Immediate and instinctive sympathy or antipathy may, however, be counteracted in actual experience, by a more intimate knowledge of the hitherto strange person. One finds, for instance, that someone who gave one an unfavorable impression at first turns out to be quite a nice person, perhaps interesting or positively charming. It even happens that women and girls may develop a passionate affection for a man who, in the beginning, was as repulsive to them as was Richard the Third to the widowed queen. It is another question whether a steadfast faithful love can spring from such a root. In many cases experience may prove the first impression to have been correct; but the reverse is also well-known and practically a daily occurrence. An excellent impression may so bias one in favor of an individual that after more intimate acquaintance one may reproach oneself for having been taken in by a brilliant outward appearance.

But our souls, our feelings, are indifferent to the great mass of people, not only to those who are unknown to us, the strangers, but also even to those whom we know reasonably well. This indifference is, however, not immovably fixed; there may easily develop a tendency fluctuating between antipathy and sympathy. Sympathies and antipathies can be of many different degrees, especially if we take into consideration the above-mentioned intelligent sympathy and antipathy which are rooted in our thinking consciousness. We shall usually have a certain degree of sympathy, even though this may be small, for those who side with us, whether we have known them before or came to know them only as fellow fighters, comrades, countrymen, or even home folks, or as colleagues, or as persons of the same faith, same political party, same profession. Sympathy may also be engendered by the fact that individuals belong to the same estate, as in the case of the nobility, or the same class, as in the case of the proletariat or the propertied class. In the same way there exists, on the other hand, some antipathy toward all those who are in the opposite camp. Such antipathy often increases to the point of hatred, especially if a real conflict exists between the opposing sides. In other instances such antipathy manifests itself only in, and is reduced to, greater indifference, so that it can easily, as a result of close acquaintance or other motives, be transformed into real sympathy. However, the same or similar interests are sufficient to arouse sympathy to the extent that such similarities are in the consciousness of those involved, and by the same token contrary interests will evoke antipathy. For example, at times the masses have and are conscious of common interests as consumers. At such times

they will feel a slight sympathy for one another. Their interests are opposed to those of producers and merchants, toward whom their antipathy is directed, and such antipathy is stronger than their mutual sympathy.

3. *Confidence and Mistrust*. The third difference to which I wish to draw attention is that of confidence or mistrust toward other people. An individual whom we know will inspire in us a certain confidence, however slight; a stranger, on the other hand, is likely to create in us a certain feeling, often quite strong, of mistrust. Furthermore, sympathy may easily and rather quickly lead to a feeling of confidence which is often just as quickly regretted, whereas antipathy may arouse, strengthen, and further a mistrust which sometimes proves to be unwarranted. But here again, how many gradations exist! Only in a chosen few do we have such great and abiding confidence that we rely on their absolute sincerity, affection, and faithfulness towards ourselves and our nearest, and feel we can build upon their devotion. As is well known, these chosen few are not always our "equals." When not, they have no claim to that sympathy which is characteristic of those of the same class, the same estate. The faithful servant, the faithful maid, are not only figures of sagas and fiction, although they are more frequent under simpler and more rural than under modern conditions. Confidence betrayed—this is indeed a terrible, embittering experience which often leads to despair. But even mistrust can change into confidence, just as abused confidence, apart from arousing indignation, anger, and embitterment, will immediately turn into mistrust directed toward those formerly honored with confidence. Not only one's own but also other people's experience may lead one either to confidence in or mistrust of a person, thus investing him with either a reliable or a dubious reputation.

On the other hand, confidence has become highly impersonalized through modern trade. Personality has come to be of little or no importance. Only the "wealth" of a person counts, for it is assumed, and usually on valid grounds, that self-interest will induce even the personally less reliable business man to pay his debts as long as he is able to do so. Personal reliability fades as it is transformed into reliability as debtor. As a rule, it is the business or manufacturing firm (irrespective of the moral qualities of its owner or manager), which has financial credit and is sound, or at least is supposed to be sound. In fact, as a result of this kind of confidence in the financial standing of the firm, the moral quality of its head may still be considered intact even though there may exist good reasons for a contrary judgment. Thus, confidence in the financial credit of the person or firm, like confidence in personal qualities, is often betrayed.



Moreover, without being conscious of it, we often trust many people on the strength of very slight knowledge concerning the persons involved. Sometimes we do not even know them or anything about them except that they are at their posts. This, too, is impersonalized confidence. Personal confidence is essentially conditioned by the personalities of those who confide; that is, by their intelligence, their knowledge of human nature, and their experience, on which the latter is based. Thus in the case of personal confidence, simple-minded and inexperienced people are in general inclined to be trustful, whereas the intelligent and experienced persons are inclined to doubt. However, this difference all but disappears where rationalized confidence is concerned. We do not know the engineer who runs our train or the captain and the pilots who direct the course of our ship; in many cases we do not know the doctor whom we ask for advice, to whom we even entrust body and life for a surgical operation. Very often we do not know the lawyer whom we request to take our case, still less do we know the judge who will decide the case for or against us, and who, we hope and expect, will restore our rights and our honor and do justice to our claims. In all these cases we rely (a) on skill (or knowledge), or (b) on volition. As far as that skill (or knowledge) is concerned, we are justified in trusting an individual because (1) skill (or knowledge) is bound up with his profession. How could he dare call himself a doctor, a lawyer, or a judge, if he were not such? The shoemaker, the locksmith, and the tailor also know their trades, their arts. The greater the importance of a matter, the more we rely on (2) examinations, (3) experience, (4) reputation, and (5) the personal advice or recommendation which opened the door for a man or woman to this activity or this office. In many cases, however, as, for instance, in that of the engineer or pilot, only the qualifications (2) and (3) are required.

As far as volition is concerned, we put our trust in (a) certain normal moral qualities and the assumption that the individual in whose care we entrust ourselves could not possibly follow this profession if he did not possess at least a modicum of such qualities. Closely connected therewith is (b) his own self-interest, either material or nonmaterial, both of which usually merge into each other.

But it can easily be seen that something else besides these reasons underlies our peace of mind, our feeling of security. Our confidence in that which is regular and safe, although we are rarely aware of it, rests upon the three great systems of social will which I define as order, law, and morality. The

two functions last mentioned, the legal and the moral orders or systems, are the fully-developed types of the first one.

4. *Interdependence*. And now I come to the fourth difference, which is closely related to and partly contained in the first three. This is the difference between my condition in case I am "bound" in some way to other people and my condition in case I am completely independent and free from them. The condition of being bound to others is the exact opposite of freedom, the former implying a moral obligation, moral imperative, or a prohibition. There exist a great variety of such "ties," which involve an individual through different types of relationships. These ties may also be called types of social entities (*soziale Wesenheiten*) or forms which link him to his fellow beings. He is bound in these social entities if he is conscious of being linked to them. His consciousness of the tie is either predominantly emotional or predominantly intellectual. From this consciousness, there results a feeling or a realization of moral obligation, moral imperative, or prohibition, and a righteous aversion to the consequences of incorrect, illegal, and unlawful, as well as of immoral and indecent conduct and action.

To talk of such relationships as "bonds" implies, of course, a figurative use of the term, just as no social ties or associations are to be interpreted in terms of the literal meaning of the words. That a human being is tied to another human being can indicate a state of complete dependence. This, however, is a figurative expression indicating that one of the two beings involved does not or cannot have a will of his own, but depends for whatever he may desire on the volition of the other one. Thus the dependence of the infant, and, in a diminishing degree, of the small child, on his mother or any other person who takes care of him, is an obvious fact. Of similar character are those types of dependence in which the well-being of a person is determined less by his own will than by the will of others. Such dependence is most typically exemplified by servitude, slavery, and the like. It finds its most visible and thus most forceful expression in such physical constraint as was used with slaves and is still practiced in transporting hardened criminals. Referring to an inability to act on one's own will which may result from a completely weak will, we also speak of hypnotized persons, sexual slavery, and the like.

5. *Social Relationship or Bond; Connection*. Social relationship or bond implies interdependence, and it means that the will of the one person influences that of the other, either furthering or impeding, or both. If the volition of the one meets and combines with the volition of the other, there results a common volition which may be interpreted as unified because it is

mutual. This common volition postulates or requires, and thus controls, the volition of A in accordance with the volition of B as well as the volition of B in accordance with the volition of A. This is the simplest case of the social will of two individuals, whom I prefer to call persons when referring to volition and action of each toward the other. In the same way as a person can be linked with another person, he can be united with many persons, and these again can be connected with one another; thus the will of each single person who belongs to a group is part of and at the same time conditioned by the group's collective will, which is to say he is dependent on it. Such collective will can take various forms, determined by the number of persons involved, its own character, and the mode of its existence, that is, the way in which it is expressed. Also, the individuals become conscious of it in many different ways. The collective will can remain the same for an indefinite period, but it can also from time to time undergo change by renewed acts. It can affect the persons involved either directly or indirectly in that a more comprehensive collective will may influence a smaller group and this, in turn, exert its influence upon the smallest unit. Every collective will can represent itself in a single natural person or in a number of those whose common will is conceived as the representative of a higher collective will.

Every collective will can be given a special name, but it can also bear the name of a thinking agent which designates the united multitude. What this name stands for is then conceived and thought of by the persons of this group as a person like themselves. That is to say, a collective person is one on whom either other collective persons or, in the simplest case, natural persons ultimately depend. They all know of their dependence on one another and thereby on the collective will which, in the simplest case, represents their own interrelationship or unity, and it is through this very knowledge that they are connected with one another. All following discussions in which such names are used must be interpreted in this sense. These names are taken from everyday language, where they were given a fixed meaning long ago, although very often without the proper insight into their real character. No clear and conscious distinction was made between a meaning that points only to the external form or significance as a group, a crowd, a band, and so on, and a meaning which is given to them by a scientific system of concepts, in which they are to be conceived as personalities and agents of a collective or social will; in other words, as social entities or phenomena.

That all these social entities have both similarities and differences in meaning and form can easily be deduced. Similarity exists in so far as they contain a social will which determines the co-operating individual wills by

giving them rights as well as imposing duties on them and by defining the right of one person as the duty of another and vice versa. The difference among them lies in the fact that each finds its most perfect form as an imaginary (artificial) social person. Such a collective person consists of single persons, first individuals or, possibly, other subordinated collective persons. Even in the simplest possible case for every person concerned there is imposed a moral imperative by the collective (joint) will as well as by his own will.

## *II: Barter and Exchange as Simplest Type of Social Relation or Bond*

We shall most easily understand the diverse *modus operandi* of social relationships or bonds if we relate all the varieties to the simplest type, which is also the most rational one. Here we are thinking of the case of simple barter or mutual promissory obligations, which may be conceived of as prolonged barter. Barter presents a typical and clear case because, in its simplest form, it involves two separate objects which are related in no other way than that each is a means with respect to the other, which is considered an end; each of them is useful and thus of value as a means to obtain the other.

If we agree to conceive all acts of mutual aid and assistance as barter or exchange, it will be evident that all living together is a continuous exchange of such aid and assistance and that the degree of its intimacy depends upon its frequency. However, the character of these relationships is determined by the underlying motives involved, which motives will manifest definite differences. In the simple case where only two persons are considered, the essential motive on the part of those involved can be characterized as follows: from one side there may be expectation of and desire for assistance, from the other there may be expectation, desire, and restraint. This condition resembles the expectation and demands of a collective entity which binds the individual; that is to say, so connects him to others and constrains him that this entity may take the place of and represent these others. In distinct contrast is the case in which one's motives to satisfy one's volition and desires take the form of satisfying those of another individual, others, or whole groups, even though one's own volition and desire may apparently be fostered by the similar volition and desires of the other or others. Such volition and desire necessarily result in a different attitude toward the other individual or individuals. It is essentially unconditional, like the love of the mother for her infant, from whom she does not expect or require anything as long



as he has not reached the age of reason. Love alone does not bind. Thus definite liking and benevolence, even though it be love, becomes atrophied when one party fails to return it. Such love may be allowed to continue its pitiful existence on the basis of the faintest hope or mere knowledge of the presence of the other loved one, because one part may make the welfare of the other his own will, as is true especially in the case of sexual love. However, such love can also turn to hate (the more passionate, the earlier) which then becomes an inverted love, just as self-love frequently leads to self-destruction.

The derived and higher type of social bond always contains that element which we may designate, on the one hand, as containing mutual advantage, assistance, or amicable activity, and, on the other, as always containing an element of binding social will which works on and controls the individual will. Always the obligation and reciprocity makes itself felt and is thereby recognizable in that an inadequate and opposing action of a partner (participant or fellow member) calls forth a counteraction of one or the other and consequently of the whole if this latter continues to exist, which will be the more likely the less this whole's continuity depends upon the action of one person. Thus, for example, a friendship of two and frequently a marriage, even though this latter is conditioned by an existing social will of a higher type, is dependent upon the behavior of both partners and may be broken. On the other hand, in an association the individual cannot as a rule accomplish this, and only the action of a group strengthens or endangers its existence. The opposition between a majority and a minority makes itself felt in such a group and thus it may differ from the condition in which two individuals are involved. This difference is apparent if the majority wishes to retain or change the whole and if it is strong enough, as opposed to the minority, to make its will prevail over the whole. One must conceive as a normal case the condition in which individuals or parts, such as a minority, which act against the social will call forth the indignation of the majority, and the latter is in possession of sufficient power to react accordingly and, in so far as this is the case, will objectively represent the will of the whole even when the will of an important minority is opposed. Sociologically more important, however, is the case in which the principle prevails, perhaps having been recorded in expressed form, that the will of the majority or, at least, an especially large majority, shall prevail as the will of the whole corporation, social organization, or commission, so that after a resolution is passed the opposition is dissolved, at least for the time being.

## SOCIAL ENTITIES (WESENHEITEN)

Sociology as a special science has as its subject the "things" which result from social life, and only from social life. They are products of human thinking and exist only for such thinking; that is, primarily for individuals themselves who are bound together and who think of their collective existence as dominating them and as a something which is represented as a person capable of volition and action, to which they give a name. The existence of such a something, a social person, can be recognized and acknowledged by outsiders, who may themselves be single or associated individuals, or by a social entity formed by such persons. Such recognition, if mutual, may create a new, essentially similar entity, in the most perfect case, a new social person, which again is existent immediately for its founders but can also be observed, recognized, and acknowledged by outsiders. The manner of existence of this social thing or person is not unlike that of the gods, which, being imagined and thought of by men who are bound together, are also created in order to be glorified, whether the form be that of an animal, a human being, or mixed being. There is, however, an obvious difference in that the gods disappear for the people to whom they belong when their existence is no longer believed in, even though they remain as subjects of the theoretical, historical, and sociological thinking. In contradistinction, social "entities," as we call them, do not require such belief or delusion. They can be thought of as subjects of common volition and operation in clear perception of their imaginary nature. Of course, it is also possible, indeed not an infrequent occurrence, that to the social entities, just as in the case of the gods, a supernatural, or better stated, a metaphysical nature will be ascribed. The fanciful mythological thinking to which man has always been inclined constantly prevails in this sense and will, therefore, often confuse the inventions and phantasies of one or the other type; the social entities, especially the collective persons, are superior, powerful, and exalted, and so are the gods. Thus in the social entity there exists at least some of the godlike characteristics. They stand under the special protection of the gods, especially when to such an entity a supernatural origin is ascribed, as in the case of the church.

When the god is himself represented as a powerful and feared or as a benevolent and kind ruler, he is ruler over the earthly ruler, giving the latter his consecration, confirming and befriending him, establishing his right, especially the right of hereditary succession, as a god-given right. By the grace of God the earthly ruler reigns, enjoying a godlike veneration. All

kinds of veneration, as they spring from natural feeling as childish adoration or as awe of the weak for the strong, who may be hated and detested, are interwoven one with another and with the gods in whom they find their consummation and shine forth as religion. As obedient servants of the gods, powerful men are agents and interpreters of the will of God and thereby increase their own power.

Even though this mere creature of thought does not live in the clouds or on Olympus but has ascribed to it an existence such as that which is perhaps embodied in the assembly of an armed force or other meeting of the people, it will not easily avoid that condition in which its existence is brought into relationship with that of the gods. The belief in the gods can support the belief in the republic just as the belief in the church and the veneration of the priesthood are directly related. The scientific critical attitude destroys all of these illusions. It recognizes that only human thought and human will are contained in all of these imaginary realms, that they are based upon human hopes and fears, requirements and needs, and that in their exalted forms they are comparable to poetical works of art on which the spirit of the ages has worked.

Thus we return to the simple problem and thought: what, why, and how do thinking human beings will and what? The simple and most general answer is: they want to attain an end and seek the most appropriate means of attaining it. They strive toward a goal and seek the correct way leading thereto. This is the action, the behavior, which in the affairs of practical life, of daily work, of struggle, of trade, has through the ages been directed and made easier by pleasure and devotion, by hope and fear, by practice and habit, by model and precept.

#### HUMAN VOLITION

The general human volition, which we may conceive as natural and original, is fulfilled through knowledge and ability and is also fundamentally conditioned through reciprocal interaction with them. The whole intellect, even in the plainest man, expresses itself in his knowledge and correspondingly in his volition. Not only what he has learned but also the inherited mode of thought and perception of the forefathers influences his sentiment, his mind and heart, his conscience. Consequently I name the will thought of in this latter sense natural will (*Wesenwille*), contrasting it with the type of rational will (*Kürwille*) in which the thinking has gained predominance and come to be the directing agent. The rational will is to be differentiated from intellectual will. Intellectual will gets along well with subconscious

motives which lie deep in man's nature and at the base of his natural will, whereas rational will eliminates such disturbing elements and is as clearly conscious as possible.

Deliberation, the thought form of ends and means, can separate the two, one from the other. From this results the inference that the means are not fundamentally connected to the end; that is to say, the means and end are not allied, interwoven, or identical. The means may rather be completely isolated and therefore possibly even stand in strong opposition to the ends. In this case the end under consideration requires that the means be as suitable to it as possible, that no means or segment thereof be used which is not conditioned by the end, but that the means most suitable for the attainment of a given end be chosen and used. This implies a definite divorce and differentiation of end and means which, therefore, permits no consideration of means other than that of their perfect suitability for the attaining of the end. The principle of the rationalization of the means develops everywhere as a necessary consequence the more thought, in accordance with the desire and intention, is intensively focused on the end or the goal. This signifies, therefore, an attitude of indifference to the means with respect to every consideration other than their greatest effectiveness in attaining the end. This indifference is frequently attained only by overcoming resistance resulting from motives other than the consideration of the end, which motives may hinder, dissuade, or frighten one from the application of this means. Thus action which adjusts the means to the end desired may be viewed with definite reluctance, also with fear and anxiety, or, more characteristically, with aversion and, what is akin thereto, with feelings of opposition such as come with remorse. With some exaggeration, Goethe says the acting man is always "without conscience." In reality, the acting person often finds it necessary, if he "unscrupulously" follows his goal, to repress or overcome his conscientiousness. On account of this necessity, many consider themselves justified in despising or disowning such feeling, and sometimes they even find their satisfaction in bravado and arrogance, making themselves free from all such considerations.

This means, therefore, that on the one hand there is the simple emotional (impulsive) and, therefore, irrational volition and action, whereas on the other there is the simple rational volition and action in which the means are arranged, a condition which often stands in conflict with the feelings. Between these two extremes all real volition and action takes place. The consideration that most volition and action resembles or is inclined toward either one or the other makes it possible to establish the concepts of natural



will and rational will, which concepts are rightly applied only in this sense. I call them normal concepts. What they represent are ideal types, and they should serve as standards by which reality may be recognized and described.

#### GEMEINSCHAFT AND GESELLSCHAFT

It is not a question of contrasting the rational will with the nonrational will, because intellect and reason belong to natural will as well as to rational will. Indeed, intellect in natural will attains its fruition in the creative, formative, and artistic ability and works and in the spirit of the genius. This is true even though in its elementary forms natural will means nothing more than a direct, naïve, and therefore emotional volition and action, whereas, on the other hand, rational will is most frequently characterized by consciousness. To the latter belongs manufacturing as contrasted with creation; therefore, we speak of mechanical work (as expressed in the German and other languages) referring to forging plans, machinations, weaving intrigues, or fabrications which are directed to the objective of bringing forth the means, the exclusive determination of which is that of producing the outward effects necessary to attain our desired ends.

When these concepts are applied to associations, it should not be understood that we are thinking only of the regular motives leading to the entrance into an association, creating of a confederation, or organizing of a union or special interest group, or even the founding of a commonwealth. It is, however, of importance to recognize what motives lie at the basis of and explain the existence of all kinds of association or cause their persistence, and while we are here interested only in positive bases, this holds also for negative motives upon which persistence may be based. In this connection it is not to be understood that the bases belong fundamentally and persistently either to the one or the other category, that is, of natural will or rational will. On the contrary a dynamic condition or process is assumed which corresponds to the changeable elements of human feeling and thinking. The motives fluctuate so that they are now of one category, then the other. However, wherever such development takes place a certain regularity or even "law," in the sense of a tendency toward abstract rational forms, may be observed.

I call all kinds of association in which natural will predominates *Gemeinschaft*, all those which are formed and fundamentally conditioned by rational will, *Gesellschaft*. Thus these concepts signify the model qualities of the essence and the tendencies of being bound together. Thus both names are in the present context stripped of their connotation as designating social

entities or groups, or even collective or artificial persons; the essence of both *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* is found interwoven in all kinds of associations, as will be shown.

#### RELATIONSHIPS, COLLECTIVES, SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

As social entities or forms, I differentiate: (1) Social relationships (*Verhältnisse*), (2) Collectives (*Samtschaften*), (3) Social organizations or corporate bodies (*Körperschaften*), (leagues, fellowships, associations, or special-interest groups).

The third form is always thought of as a kind of human person capable of creating a definite unified will which, as the will of the natural or artificial persons belonging to it, binds and constrains them to act in conformity with such will, which may be directed inwardly or outwardly. In the social relationship it is not the relationship itself which is so considered, even though it be designated by a special name. However, it is essential that its subjects or bearers, who may be considered as "members" of the relationship, are conscious of it as a relationship which they will affirmatively and thus establish as an existing reality. This manner of establishing a social relationship represents in embryonic or emergent form what is evolved to perfection in the establishment of a social organization or corporation capable of willing and action.

The collective lies between the social relationship and the social organization. It is thought of as a plurality which, like the social organization, includes a multitude of persons so held together that there result common intentions, desires, inclinations, disinclinations—in short, common feelings and ways of thinking. However, the collective is not capable of real volition. It can reach no decision as long as it does not "organize" itself into a committee, special-interest group, or council.

#### THE SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP

The social relationship is the most general and simplest social entity or form. It also has the deepest foundation, because it rests partly upon the original, natural, and actual conditions as the causes of connections, of mutual dependence, and of attachment among men, and because it rests partly on the most fundamental, most universal, and most necessary requirements of human beings. The one basis, like the other, is raised to consciousness with different effects. If a natural relationship exists, as for example between my brother and me, on one hand, or between my brother-in-law, my step-brother, adopted or foster brother and me, on the other, I have the feeling

that we are intimate, that we affirm each other's existence, that ties exist between us, that we know each other and to a certain extent are sympathetic toward each other, trusting and wishing each other well. This is true although in the latter case, involving persons who are not blood brothers, the relationship is not so natural as in the first where I know the same mother gave birth to both my brother and me. From this it follows that we have certain values in common, whether it be that we are obliged to manage an estate together, or that we divide possessions as inheritances between us, or that the matter of intellectual goods or ideals is involved. At any rate, out of each such relationship, even between two, there results the recognition and acknowledgement of the social relationship as such on the part of each and therefore the knowledge of each that definite mutual action must regularly result therefrom. This action is expected and demanded of each by the other, and each expects and demands of himself that it be carried out in relation to the other. In this lies the embryo of "rights" which each claims for himself but also concedes to the other, as well as "duties" to which one feels obligated but which one puts upon oneself knowing that the other party wills that he be and considers that he is so obligated.

However, when I become conscious of my most urgent needs and find that I can neither satisfy them out of my own volition nor out of a natural relation, this means that I must do something to satisfy my need; that is, engage in free activity which is bound only by the requirement or possibly conditioned by the need but not by consideration for other people. Soon I perceive that I must work on other people in order to influence them to deliver or give something to me which I need. Possibly in restricted individual cases my mere requests will be granted, as, for example, in the case of a piece of bread or a glass of water. However, as a rule when one is not receiving something in a *Gemeinschaft*-like relationship, such as from within the family, one must earn or buy it by labor, service, or money which has been earned previously as payment for labor or service.

I now enter or have already entered into a social relationship, but it is of a different kind. Its prototype is barter or exchange, including the more highly developed form of exchange, the sale and purchase of things or services, which are the same as things and are therefore thought of as capable of being exchanged for things or for other services. All action which is of an intellectual nature and consequently oriented by reason is of this type because comparison and thinking are necessary to it and furnish a basis for it. Social relationships which result from such barter or exchange are primarily momentary in that they involve a momentary common volition. However,

they come to have duration partly through repetition resulting in regularity of the exchange act and partly through the lengthening of the individual act by the postponement of fulfillment on the part of one or both sides. In this latter case there results a relationship, the distinguishing characteristic of which is a one-sided or mutual "promise." It is a real social relationship of obligation or mutual dependence resulting first of all from mutual promises, even though they may be expressly stated by one side and only tacitly understood by the other as such an eventual promise.

Also, the relationships which come to us from nature are in their essence mutual, are fulfilled in mutual performance. The relations produce this mutuality and demand, require, or make it necessary. Having these characteristics, they resemble the exchange relationship. However, the natural relationship is, by its very essence, of earlier origin than its subjects or members. In such natural relationships it is self-evident that action will take place and be willed in accordance with the relationship, whether it be what is contained on the one hand in the simplest relationships resulting from desire and inclination, from love or habit, or on the other hand from reason or intellect contained in the feeling of duty. These latter types of natural will change into one another, and each can be the basis of *Gemeinschaft*.

On the other hand, in the purest and most abstract contract relationship the contracting parties are thought of as separate, hitherto and otherwise independent, as strangers to each other, and perhaps even as hitherto and in other respects inimical persons. *Do, ut des* (I give, so that you will give) is the only principle of such a relationship. What I do for you, I do only as a means to effect your simultaneous, previous, or later service for me. Actually and really I want and desire only this. To get something from you is my end; my service is the means thereto, which I naturally contribute unwillingly. Only the aforesaid and anticipated result is the cause which determines my volition. This is the simplest form of rational will.

Relationships of the first type are to be classified under the concept *Gemeinschaft*, those of the other type under the concept of *Gesellschaft*, thus differentiating *Gemeinschaft*-like and *Gesellschaft*-like relationships. *Gemeinschaft*-like relationships differ to the extent that there is assumed, on the one hand, a real, even if not complete, equality in knowledge or volition, in power and in authority on the part of the participants, and on the other hand, an essential inequality in these respects. This also holds for the relations of *Gesellschaft*. In accordance with this distinction we shall differentiate between the fellowship type and the authoritative type of social relationship. Let us now consider this difference.



*A. In Gemeinschaft-like Relationships.* (a) The Fellowship Type. The simplest fellowship type is represented by a pair who live together in a brotherly, comradely, and friendly manner, and it is most likely to exist when those involved are of the same age, sex, and sentiment, are engaged in the same activity or have the same intentions, or when they are united by one idea.

In legend and history such pairs occur frequently. The Greeks used to honor such friendships as those of Achilles and Patroclus, Orestes and Pylades, Epaminondas and Pelopidas, to the extent that to Aristotle is ascribed the paradox: He who has friends has no friend. In the German language and literature it is customary to designate such sentiments, the nature of which the Greeks glorified as mutual happiness and sorrow, as a brotherly relationship. This characterization is based more on the thought of the ideal than on actual observation but it is correct in so far as brothers actually make the most natural as well as the most probable pairs of friends, more because of their origin than because of a motive.

(b) Authoritative Type. The relationship of father to child, as observations in everyday life will prove, is to be found in all the strata of society in all stages of culture. The weaker the child and the more it is in need of help, the greater the extent to which the relationship is represented by protection. Protection of necessity always carries with it authority as a condition, because protection regularly can be carried out only when the protected party follows the directions and even the commands of the protector. Although all authority has a tendency to change into the use of force, in the case of the father as well as the mother relationship such a tendency is arrested by love and tenderness. These sentiments, being of animal and vegetative origin, are more likely to be regularly accorded to a child born to a parent than to any other possessed and protected person. The general character of the father relationship can be easily extended to include similar relationships involving protection, examples of which are the step-father, foster father, the general house father, and the guardian, even though these, as representatives of the father, do not necessarily legally stand in Gemeinschaft-like relation to the ward. The authority of the father is the prototype of all Gemeinschaft-like authority. It is especially true in the case of the priesthood, even though the basis may be different. This rests primarily upon mythological conceptions which place the father in Olympus or in heaven and perhaps ascribe to the father of the gods and men numberless children. Or in a less sensual, more refined form, the father may be represented by an only son whom the struggle against polytheism tends almost to identify with the father. Little wonder

that the title *Pope* (Papa, literally "father") in the original church of all bishops was raised to the pinnacle of spiritual dignity in the Roman Church and that in the Oriental Church the especially high priests are called fathers (*Popen*) in the language of the common people. Also, world and political authority, which is often mixed with and may not be less sanctified than the spiritual, easily takes on the character of the well-wishing father, as is most plainly expressed in the term "father" of a country. The fatherly authority, however, is the special case of authority of age, and the prestige-giving quality of age expresses itself most perfectly in the authority of the father. This easily explains the eminence which is attributed to the senator in the worldly and the presbyter in the spiritual commonwealth.

(c) Mixed Relationships. In many Gemeinschaft-like relationships the essence of authority and that of fellowship are mixed. This is the case in the most important of the relationships of Gemeinschaft, the lasting relation between man and woman which is conditioned through sexual needs and reproduction whether or not the relationship is called marriage.

*B. In Gesellschaft-like Relationships.* The difference between the fellowship and authoritative types is also to be found in the Gesellschaft-like relationships. It can, however, be derived only from the fact that the authority is based upon a free contract whether between individuals, as service contracts, or by agreement of many to recognize and place a master or head over them and to obey him conditionally or unconditionally. This may be a natural person or a collective person which results directly from individuals uniting in a society, social organization, or corporate body which is capable of volition and action and can be represented through its own totality. The Gesellschaft-like authority attains its consummation in the modern state, a consummation which many predecessors strove to attain until the democratic republic came into existence and allowed for development beyond the Gesellschaft-like foundation. The actual authority results, however, in the simple Gesellschaft-like relationship, from the difference in the power of two parties, as in the labor contract. Such authority results from contracts made between the individual "employer" and individual "employee," and also from the condition out of which come "peace treaties" between victor and conquered. Apparently it is a contract, but in actuality it is coercion and abuse.

#### THE COLLECTIVE

The second concept of social entity or form is that of the collective. I make distinctions between natural, psychical, and social collectives. Our con-

cept concerns only social collectives, but these rest partly on natural and partly on psychical collectives, partly on both. This is because the essence of a social collective is to be found in the natural and psychological relationships forming the basis of the collective and are consciously affirmed and willed. This phenomenon appears everywhere in the life of a people and in many forms of mutualities, as, for example, in forms of life and customs, superstitions and religion. It is especially in evidence in the distinguishing characteristic through which a segment of a people, that is, certain classes, are given prominence, nobility, and authority. A distinguishing characteristic which has this function is partly an objective phenomenon and partly something positive in the people's consciousness. The consciousness of belonging to a controlling estate makes its appearance in a distinct manner as pride and haughtiness—feelings which in turn are coupled with the submission and modesty of those "lower" classes over which authority is exercised so long as the controlling estates, as such, are honored, and so long as their excellence, or even their divinity, is believed in.

In the case of the collective the concepts of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* should also be applied. The social collective has the characteristics of *Gemeinschaft* in so far as the members think of such a grouping as a gift of nature or created by a supernatural will, as is expressed in the simplest and most naïve manner in the Indian caste system. Here, to be fixed to a given calling is just as necessary and natural as being born, and the professional estate or group has the same significance as a large family for which the pursuit and means of making a livelihood, even if this should be accomplished by thievery, is represented as something inherited which it is a duty to retain and nurture. In all systems of ranks or estates, traces of this condition are to be found because (and to the extent that) a complete emancipation from the social relationships established at birth seldom occurred and was often impossible. Thus man as a rule submits to the social status in which parents and forebears, or, as it is wont to be expressed, "God," has placed him as if it were his lot to bear, even though it be felt as a burden, which, however, is habit and is lightened by the recognition that it cannot be changed. Indeed, within these limits there can exist an intellectual self-consciousness which affirms this estate (rank) even though it be recognized as one of the less significant. This intellectual basis manifests itself partly as the group extols itself for certain superiorities or virtues, the lack of which in the dominating estate is noticed and complained about. Also, the intellectual basis is to be found partly in the consciousness of special knowledge and skill of the group, as, for example, its art, craftsmanship, and skill, which are thought

of as being at least the equivalent of the other honored or ruling estates.

Consciousness of a social collective has different results when directed toward the attainment of definite and important ends which it knows to be and claims are its own characteristics. This happens in a pronounced way in the political and intellectual struggle in which the social strata of a people stand against each other as classes. The more the consciousness of authority as a feeling of superiority results in putting one class in such a position of power as to force the lower class to stay in its place, the more this latter will strive toward the attainment of equality and therefore the more indignant it becomes concerning oppression and arrogance on the part of the controlling class, which it attempts to restrict and displace.

Whether this process is called class struggle (*Klassenkampf*) or struggle of estates (*Ständekampf*) is not important. The struggle among the estates usually takes place earlier, is less radical, and can be allayed. The lower estates strive only for the opportunity to participate in the satisfactions of life and fundamentals of authority, allowing the controlling estate to remain in power. This latter remains in power by proclaiming its own fitness and disparaging that of the lower estates and by exerting effort to reduce these lower strata to submission.

The class struggle is more unconditional. It recognizes no estates, no natural masters. In the foreground of the consciousness of the whole class which feels that it is propertyless and therefore oppressed, stands the ideal of the *Gemeinschaft* of property in field and soil and all the implements of labor. These latter have been acquired through the art of trade or as inherited property belonging by "law" to the small minority which, as the propertied class, is set off against the propertyless class. Therefore, the class struggle becomes more conscious and general than the struggle among the estates. However, even though there be no definite form of struggle there is a corresponding consciousness which makes itself felt in many ways. The great propertyless masses prefer to think of themselves as the people (*Volk*), and the narrow class which is in control of property and its use thinks of itself as society, even though each expression is all inclusive. "The" people (*Volk*), as in the case of the estate, resembles the *Gemeinschaft*; "the" society, like the class, has, in the sense in which it is here used, the basic characteristic of *Gesellschaft*.

#### THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

The third and most important category of pure or theoretical sociology is the social organization or corporate body, a social body or union known by



many other names. It is never anything natural, neither can it be understood as a mere psychical phenomenon. It is completely and essentially a social phenomenon and must be considered as composed of several individuals. Capacity for unified volition and action, a capacity which is demonstrated most clearly as competency to pass resolutions, characterizes it. Just as the thinking individual is capable of making decisions, so is a group of several individuals when they continuously agree or agree to the extent that there prevails and is recognized a definite will as the will of all or sufficient consensus to be the will of the social organization or corporate body. Thus the volition of such a group can be represented by the will of a natural person behind whom the will of the whole social organization or corporate body stands. Continuing our discussion of social organizations or corporate bodies, we may make the following observations:

(1) A social organization or corporate body can originate from natural relationships provided these are social relationships. In this connection, kinship, the most universal and natural bond which embraces human beings, comes to our attention. The most important social organization or corporate body which originates therefrom and which among all known peoples occurs as the original form of a common life is the kinship group, the gens, clan, or whatever name is applied to designate this ancient union or unity.

Whether or not the totality of adult persons includes the women, whether their council ends in agreement which is sanctioned by a supposed will of God, or whether they rejoice in and willingly accept the decisions of a leader and head, it is under these conditions that there is formed the embryo of a consciousness which matures into something beyond a mere feeling of belonging together, and there is established and affirmed an enduring self or ego in the totality.

(2) A common relation to the soil tends to associate people who may be kinsfolk or believe themselves to be such. Neighborhood, the fact that they live together, is the basis of their union; it leads to counseling and through deliberations to resolutions. Here again the two principles of fellowship and authority will be involved. The outstanding example of an association of this type is the rural village community, which attains its consummation in the cultivation of the soil practiced in common and the possession of common property in village fields or land held in common by the village, and in the Mark-community which comes to represent the unity of several neighboring villages, communities which originally may have formed one unit.

The rural village community is frequently identical with a great family or clan but the more alien elements are taken in the more it loses its kinship

characteristics. The bond of field and soil and living together first takes its place along with and later more and more supplants the bond of common ancestry. Especially when an alien tribe and its leaders become the conquerors of a territory and establish themselves in the seats of control without extirpating or driving out all the former residents and owners does this tendency manifest itself, molding a new people (*Volĳ*) from the two groups, even though the one was subjected to new masters. The existence of the village community as a social organization or corporate body ordinarily continues in the form of a fellowship. Such a village community, however, may be modified by the power and rights of feudal lords.

(3) In the more intimate and close living together in the town, the fellowship and co-operative quality attains a new level. Living together tends to depend less on common nature. People not related by blood tend to assemble in the towns since these originally were walled-in villages or strongholds whose inhabitants were forced to co-operate for defense and for the maintenance of peace and order among themselves and thereby to form a political community, either under the rule of a lord or as citizens of equal rights. This was the great mission and service of the town (*Stadt*) community, the "Polis" which grew to be that commonwealth which later in Europe and elsewhere up to our time has bequeathed its character and name to the state (*Staat*), the mightiest of all corporate bodies. That assembly of the sovereign people, the religious association (*Ekĳlesia*), the other great commonwealth of the Roman and post-Roman period, loaned its name to the Church and spread its glory throughout the world in a similar manner.

These social bodies and communities retain their common root in that original state of belonging together which according to our concept is the *Gemeinschaft*. Indeed, although the original state of common being, living, and working is changed, it retains and is able to renew its mental and political form and its co-operative functions. Thus a people (*Volĳ*) which feels itself bound together by a common language, when held together within a national association or even when only striving to become a nation, will desire to be represented in a unity or *Volĳsgemeinschaft* which may become intensified by national consciousness and pride, but may also thereby lose its original genuineness.

#### CAPITALISTIC, MIDDLE-CLASS, OR BOURGEOIS SOCIETY (BÜRGERLICHE GESELLSCHAFT)

During this development, the original qualities of *Gemeinschaft* may be lost because there takes place a continued change in the original basis upon

which living together rests. This change reaches its consummation in what is frequently designated as individualism. Through this development social life in and of itself is not diminished, but social life of the *Gemeinschaft* is impaired and a new phenomenon develops out of the needs, interests, desires, and decisions of persons who previously worked co-operatively together and are acting and dealing one with another. This new phenomenon, the "capitalistic society," increases in power and gradually attains the ascendancy. Tending as it does to be cosmopolitan and unlimited in size, it is the most distinct form of the many phenomena represented by the sociological concept of the *Gesellschaft*.

A great transformation takes place. Whereas previously the whole of life was nurtured and arose from the profoundness of the people (*Volk*), the capitalistic society through a long process spreads itself over the totality of this people, indeed over the whole of mankind. As a totality of individuals and families it is essentially a collective of economic character composed primarily of those who partake in that wealth which, as land and capital, represents the necessary means to the production of goods of all kinds. Within narrow or far-flung borders which are determined by actual or supposed kinship bonds, of the existence of which the language group is the most valuable sign, it constructs its state, that is to say, a kind of unity resembling a town community which is capable of willing and acting. It develops as the capitalistic middle-class republic and apparently finally attains its perfection in the social republic. It considers the state a means of attaining its ends, of which not the least important is protecting its person and property as well as the intellectual attitude which gives status and honor to its supporters.

However, since this capitalistic middle-class society cannot, without betraying itself, admit its uniqueness as a collective of *Gesellschaft* in contradistinction to the people (*Volk*) or, so to speak, herald this difference by raising its own flag, it can only assert its existence through claiming to be identical with, as well as representative and advocate of, the whole people to which it furnishes guidance. This process, which does not stop with conferring equal political rights on all citizens, to a certain extent closes the always widening hiatus between the wealth monopoly of the narrow and real *Gesellschaft* and the poverty of the people, but it cannot change the essential character of the hiatus. Indeed, it deepens it, spreading and strengthening the consciousness of the "social question."

By means of political and other intellectual organization promoted by town and, to a great extent, by city life, the consciousness of the *Gesellschaft*

gradually becomes the consciousness of an increasing mass of the people. The people come more and more to think of the state as a means and tool to be used in bettering their condition, destroying the monopoly of wealth of the few, winning a share in the product. Thus the laborer would be allowed a share in proper proportion to his reasonable needs and the leaders in production their share of certain goods which are to be divided for consumption, and those things suitable for continued common utilization would be retained as common property of the *Gesellschaft*, which is to say of the people or their organized association, the state.



## ROBERT REDFIELD

IN 1930 Robert Redfield published *Tepoztlán—a Mexican Village*, a pioneer “case study” of rural community life which identified Tepoztlán as a “folk” society. Eleven years later, in his more ambitious *The Folk Culture of Yucatan*, Redfield examined four communities of southern Mexico, ranging from an Indian tribal village to an Indian-mestizo peasant village to a mestizo town to the cosmopolitan city of Mérida. Here he more fully and explicitly developed the “folk” concept by using his communities as four reference points in a “folk-urban continuum.” As one proceeds, he claimed, from the tribe to the city one finds an ascending order of cultural heterogeneity and disorganization, of secularization, and of individualization. He also suggested that his four communities can be taken roughly to schematize four historical moments in the life of a single community upon which the urban-industrial world progressively impinges. Whatever the qualifications with which this suggestion must be received, it at least indicates an historical dimension to his thinking which for many other social scientists has become lost.

In the following article, which appeared in the *American Journal of Sociology* (1947), Redfield states his notion of the folk society in its most general terms, presenting it frankly as an “ideal, a mental construction.” Unlike his case studies—in which it is implied that a folk society is not a sequestered, primitive tribe but an intermediate community within a radius of urban influence—this article extends the term “folk” to include both primitive and peasant societies. The subsequent selection by Oscar Lewis sets forth certain objections which have arisen to Redfield’s hypotheses. Many of them are concerned with the oversimplifications and normative implications attaching to the linear scale along which Redfield tends to distribute even the most disparate cultures. It should be noted, however, that Redfield is in this article more interested in the “heuristic value” of his generalizations (that is, their suggestiveness as guides to research) than in their descriptive accuracy for specific cases. Of particular interest is the debt to such classic European theoreticians as Maine, Tönnies, and Durkheim which Redfield acknowledges in elaborating his version of the *Gemeinschaft-Gesellschaft* polarity.

Robert Redfield was born in Chicago in 1897. He studied at the University of Chicago and received three degrees from that institution, including his Ph.D. in 1928. After teaching sociology at Colorado, he returned to Chicago to teach anthropology, later becoming chairman of the Department of Anthropology and dean of the Division of Social Sciences.



## THE FOLK SOCIETY

## I

Understanding of society in general and of our own modern urbanized society in particular can be gained through consideration of the societies least like our own: the primitive, or folk, societies.<sup>1</sup> All societies are alike in some respects, and each differs from others in other respects; the further assumption made here is that folk societies have certain features in common which enable us to think of them as a type—a type which contrasts with the society of the modern city.

This type is ideal, a mental construction. No known society precisely corresponds with it, but the societies which have been the chief interest of the anthropologist most closely approximate it. The construction of the type depends, indeed, upon special knowledge of tribal and peasant groups. The ideal folk society could be defined through assembling, in the imagination, the characters which are logically opposite those which are to be found in the modern city, only if we had first some knowledge of nonurban peoples to permit us to determine what, indeed, are the characteristic features of modern city living. The complete procedure requires us to gain acquaintance with many folk societies in many parts of the world and to set down in words general enough to describe most of them those characteristics which they have in common with each other and which the modern city does not have.

In short, we move from folk society to folk society, asking ourselves what

---

This selection has been reprinted from Robert Redfield, "The Folk Society," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 52 (Jan., 1947), pp. 293-308, by permission of the publisher.

<sup>1</sup> Neither the term "primitive" nor any other is denotative, and none has sufficient generally accepted precise meaning to allow us to know in just what characters of a society to discover the degree to which it is or is not "primitive," "simple," or whatever. The words "nonliterate" or "preliterate" do call attention to a particular character, literacy, but understanding is still required as to when a society is "literate" and as to what form or degree of literacy has significance. There are head-hunting tribes, in other respects as primitive as were the Pawnee Indians in the seventeenth century, that have knowledge of writing. In certain Mexican villages most children and many adults have formal knowledge of the arts of reading and writing, but in most other respects these village societies are much more like tribal societies than they are like our western cities.

The word "folk," which will be used in this paper, is no more precise than any other. It is used here because, better than others, it suggests the inclusion in our comparisons of peasant and rustic people who are not wholly independent of cities and because in its compounds, "folklore" and "folk song," it points, in a rough way, to the presence of folklore and folk songs, as recognized by the collector of such materials, as a sign of a society to be examined in making up the characterization of the ideal type with which we are here concerned. But the question of the word to be used is of small importance.

it is about them that makes them like each other and different from the modern city. So we assemble the elements of the ideal type. The more elements we add, the less will any one real society correspond to it. As the type is constructed, real societies may be arranged in an order of degree of resemblance to it. The conception develops that any one real society is more or less "folk." But the more elements we add, the less possible it becomes to arrange real societies in a single order of degree of resemblance to the type, because one of two societies will be found to resemble the ideal type strongly in one character and weakly in another, while in the next society strong resemblance will lie in the latter character and not in the former. This situation, however, is an advantage, for it enables us to ask and perhaps answer questions, first, as to whether certain characters tend to be found together in most societies, and then, if certain of them do, why.

Anyone attempting to describe the ideal folk society must take account of and in large degree include certain characterizations which have been made by many students, each of whom has been attentive to some but not to all aspects of the contrast between folk and modern urban society. Certain students have derived the characterization from examination of a number of folk societies and have generalized upon them in the light of contrast provided by modern urban society; the procedure defined above and followed by the writer. This is illustrated by Goldenweiser's characterization of five primitive societies. He says that they are small, isolated, nonliterate; that they exhibit local cultures; that they are relatively homogeneous with regard to the distribution of knowledge, attitudes, and functions among the population; that the individual does not figure as a conspicuous unit; and that knowledge is not explicitly systematized.

In other cases the students have compared the state of certain societies at an early time with the same, or historical descendant of the same, society at a later time. In this way Maine arrived at his influential contrasts between society based on kinship and society based on territory, and between a society of status and one of contract. In the case of this procedure, as in the case of the next, broad and illuminating conceptions are offered us to apply to folk societies as we contrast them with modern urban society. We are to find out if one of the contrasting terms is properly applicable to folk society and the other term to modern urban society.

In the work of still other students there is apparent no detailed comparison of folk with urbanized societies or of early society with later; rather, by inspection of our own society or of society in general, contrasting aspects of all society are recognized and named. This procedure is perhaps never

followed in the unqualified manner just described, for in the instances about to be mentioned there is evidence that folk or ancient society has been compared with modern urbanized society. Nevertheless, the emphasis placed by men of this group is upon characteristics which, contrasting logically, in real fact co-exist in every society and help to make it up. Here belongs Tönnies' contrast between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, or that aspect of society which appears in the relations that develop without the deliberate intention of anyone out of the mere fact that men live together, as contrasted with the aspect of society which appears in the relations entered into deliberately by independent individuals through agreement to achieve certain recognized ends. Comparable is Durkheim's distinction between that social solidarity which results from the sharing of common attitudes and sentiments and that which results from the complementary functional usefulnesses of the members of the group. In the "social segment"—the form of society existing in terms of "mechanical solidarity"—the law is "repressive"; in the "social organ"—the form of society existing in terms of "organic solidarity"—the law is "restitutive."

It may be asked how closely the constructed type arrived at by any one investigator who follows the procedure sketched above will resemble that reached by another doing the same. It may be supposed that to the extent to which the real societies examined by the one investigator constitute a sample of the range and variety of societies similar to the sample constituted by the societies examined by the other, and to the extent that the general conceptions tentatively held by the one are similar to those held by the other, the results will be (except as modified by other factors) the same. For the purposes of understanding which are served by the method of the constructed type, however, it is not necessary to consider the question. The type is an imagined entity, created only because through it we may hope to understand reality. Its function is to suggest aspects of real societies which deserve study, and especially to suggest hypotheses as to what, under certain defined conditions, may be generally true about society. Any ideal type will do, although it is safe to assert that that ideal construction has most heuristic value which depends on close and considered knowledge of real folk societies and which is guided by an effective scientific imagination—whatever that may be.

## II

"The conception of a 'primitive society' which we ought to form," wrote Sumner, "is that of small groups scattered over a territory." The folk society



is a small society. There are no more people in it than can come to know each other well, and they remain in long association with each other. Among the Western Shoshone the individual parental family was the group which went about, apart from other families, collecting food; a group of families would assemble and so remain for a few weeks, from time to time, to hunt together; during the winter months such a group of families would form a single camp. Such a temporary village included perhaps a hundred people. The hunting or food-collecting bands considered by Steward, representing many parts of the world, contained, in most cases, only a few score people. A Southwestern Pueblo contained no more than a few thousand persons.

The folk society is an isolated society. Probably there is no real society whose members are in complete ignorance of the existence of people other than themselves; the Andamanese, although their islands were avoided by navigators for centuries, knew of outsiders and occasionally came in contact with Malay or Chinese visitors. Nevertheless, the folk societies we know are made up of people who have little communication with outsiders, and we may conceive of the ideal folk society as composed of persons having communication with no outsider.

This isolation is one half of a whole of which the other half is intimate communication among the members of the society. A group of recent castaways is a small and isolated society, but it is not a folk society; and if the castaways have come from different ships and different societies, there will have been no previous intimate communication among them, and the society will not be composed of people who are much alike.

May the isolation of the folk society be identified with the physical immobility of its members? In building this ideal type, we may conceive of the members of the society as remaining always within the small territory they occupy. There are some primitive peoples who have dwelt from time immemorial in the same small valley, and who rarely leave it. Certain of the pueblos of the American Southwest have been occupied by the same people or their descendants for many generations. On the other hand, some of the food-collecting peoples, such as the Shoshone Indians and certain aborigines of Australia, move about within a territory of very considerable extent; and there are Asiatic folk groups that make regular seasonal migrations hundreds of miles in extent.

It is possible to conceive of the members of such a society as moving about physically without communicating with members of other groups than their own. Each of the Indian villages of the midwest highlands of Guatemala is a folk society distinguishable by its customs and even by the physical

type of its members from neighboring villages, yet the people are great travelers, and in the case of one of the most distinct communities, Chichicastenango, most of the men travel far and spend much of their time away from home. This does not result, however, in much intimate communication between those traveling villagers and other peoples. The gipsies have moved about among the various peoples of the earth for generations, and yet they retain many of the characteristics of a folk society.

Through books the civilized people communicate with the minds of other people and other times, and an aspect of the isolation of the folk society is the absence of books. The folk communicate only by word of mouth; therefore the communication upon which understanding is built is only that which takes place among neighbors, within the little society itself. The folk has no access to the thought and experience of the past, whether of other peoples or of their own ancestors, such as books provide. Therefore, oral tradition has no check or competitor. Knowledge of what has gone before reaches no further back than memory and speech between old and young can make it go; behind "the time of our grandfathers" all is legendary and vague. With no form of belief established by written record, there can be no historical sense, such as civilized people have, no theology, and no basis for science in recorded experiment. The only form of accumulation of experience, except the tools and other enduring articles of manufacture, is the increase of wisdom which comes as the individual lives longer; therefore the old knowing more than the young can know until they too have lived that long, have prestige and authority.

The people who make up a folk society are much alike. Having lived in long intimacy with one another, and with no others, they have come to form a single biological type. The somatic homogeneity of local, inbred populations has been noted and studied. Since the people communicate with one another and with no others, one man's learned ways of doing and thinking are the same as another's. Another way of putting this is to say that in the ideal folk society, what one man knows and believes is the same as what all men know and believe. Habits are the same as customs. In real fact, of course, the differences among individuals in a primitive group and the different chances of experience prevent this ideal state of things from coming about. Nevertheless, it is near enough to the truth for the student of a real folk society to report it fairly well by learning what goes on in the minds of a few of its members, and a primitive group has been presented, although sketchily, as learned about from a single member. The similarity among the members is found also as one generation is com-

pared with its successor. Old people find young people doing, as they grow up, what the old people did at the same age, and what they have come to think right and proper. This is another way of saying that in such a society there is little change.

The members of the folk society have a strong sense of belonging together. The group which an outsider might recognize as composed of similar persons different from members of other groups is also the group of people who see their own resemblances and feel correspondingly united. Communicating intimately with each other, each has a strong claim on the sympathies of the others. Moreover, against such knowledge as they have of societies other than their own, they emphasize their own mutual likeness and value themselves as compared with others. They say of themselves "we" as against all others, who are "they."

Thus we may characterize the folk society as small, isolated, nonliterate, and homogeneous, with a strong sense of group solidarity. Are we not soon to acknowledge the simplicity of the technology of the ideal folk society? Something should certainly be said about the tools and tool-making of this generalized primitive group, but it is not easy to assign a meaning to "simple," in connection with technology which will do justice to the facts as known from the real folk societies. The preciseness with which each tool, in a large number of such tools, meets its needs in the case of the Eskimo, for example, makes one hesitate to use the word "simple." Some negative statements will appear to be safe: secondary and tertiary tools—tools to make tools—are relatively few as compared with primary tools; there is no making of artifacts by multiple, rapid, machine manufacture; there is little or no use of natural power.

There is not much division of labor in the folk society: what one person does is what another does. In the ideal folk society all the tools and ways of production are shared by everybody. The "everybody" must mean "every adult man" or "every adult woman," for the obvious exception to the homogeneity of the folk society lies in the differences between what men do and know and what women do and know. These differences are clear and unexceptional (as compared with our modern urban society where they are less so). "Within the local group there is no such thing as a division of labor save as between the sexes," writes Radcliffe-Brown about the Andaman Islanders. ". . . Every man is expected to be able to hunt pig, to harpoon turtle and to catch fish, and also to cut a canoe, to make bows and arrows and all the other objects that are made by men." So all men share the same interests and have, in general, the same experience of life.

We may conceive, also, of the ideal folk society as a group economically independent of all others: the people produce what they consume and consume what they produce. Few, if any, real societies are completely in this situation; some Eskimo groups perhaps most closely approach it. Although each little Andamanese band could get along without getting anything from any other, exchange of goods occurred between bands by a sort of periodic gift-giving.

The foregoing characterizations amount, roughly, to saying that the folk society is a little world off by itself, a world in which the recurrent problems of life are met by all its members in much the same way. This statement, while correct enough, fails to emphasize an important, perhaps the important aspect of the folk society. The ways in which the members of the society meet the recurrent problems of life are conventionalized ways; they are the results of long intercommunication within the group in the face of these problems; and these conventionalized ways have become inter-related within one another so that they constitute a coherent and self-consistent system. Such a system is what we mean in saying that the folk society is characterized by "a culture." A culture is an organization or integration of conventional understandings. It is, as well, the acts and the objects, in so far as they represent the type characteristic of that society, which express and maintain these understandings. In the folk society this integrated whole, this system, provides for all the recurrent needs of the individual from birth to death and of the society through the seasons and the years. The society is to be described, and distinguished from others, largely by presenting this system.

This is not the same as saying, as was said early in this paper, that in the folk society what one man does is the same as what another man does. What one man does in a mob is the same as what another man does, but a mob is not a folk society. It is, so far as culture is concerned, its very antithesis. The members of a mob (which is a kind of "mass") each do the same thing, it is true, but it is a very immediate and particular thing, and it is done without much reference to tradition. It does not depend upon and express a great many conventional understandings related to one another. A mob has no culture. The folk society exhibits culture to the greatest conceivable degree. A mob is an aggregation of people doing the same simple thing simultaneously. A folk society is an organization of people doing many different things successively as well as simultaneously. The members of a mob act with reference to the same object of attention. The members of a folk society are guided in acting by previously established com-



prehensive and interdependent conventional understandings; at any one time they do many different things, which are complexly related to one another to express collective sentiments and conceptions. When the turn comes for the boy to do what a man does, he does what a man does; thus, though in the end the experiences of all individuals of the same sex are alike, the activities of the society seen at a moment of time, are diverse, while interdependent and consistent.

The Papago Indians, a few hundred of them, constituted a folk society in southern Arizona. Among these Indians a war party was not so simple a thing as a number of men going out together to kill the enemy. It was a complex activity involving everybody in the society both before, during, and after the expedition and dramatizing the religious and moral ideas fundamental to Papago life. Preparation for the expedition involved many practical or ritual acts on the part of the immediate participants, their wives and children, previously successful warriors, and many others. While the party was away, the various relatives of the warriors had many things to do or not to do—prayer, fasting, preparation of ritual paraphernalia, etc. These were specialized activities, each appropriate to just that kind of relative or other category of person. So the war was waged by everybody. These activities, different and special as they were, interlocked, so to speak, with each other to make a large whole, the society-during-a-war-expedition. And all these specialized activities obeyed fundamental principles, understood by all and expressed and reaffirmed in the very forms of the acts—the gestures of the rituals, the words of songs, the implied or expressed explanations and admonitions of the elders to the younger people. All understood that the end in view was the acquisition by the group of the supernatural power of the slain enemy. This power, potentially of great positive value, was dangerous, and the practices and rituals had as their purposes first the success of the war party and then the draining-off of the supernatural power acquired by the slaying into a safe and “usable” form.

We may say, then, that in the folk society conventional behavior is strongly patterned: it tends to conform to a type or a norm. These patterns are inter-related in thought and in action with one another, so that one tends to evoke others and to be consistent with the others. Every customary act among the Papago when the successful warriors return is consistent with and is a special form of the general conceptions held as to supernatural power. We may still further say that the patterns of what people think should be done are closely consistent with what they believe is done, and that there is one way, or a very few conventional ways, in which everybody

has some understanding and some share, of meeting each need that arises. The culture of a folk society is, therefore, one of those wholes which is greater than its parts. Gaining a livelihood takes support from religion, and the relations of men to men are justified in the conceptions held of the supernatural world or in some other aspect of the culture. Life, for the member of the folk society, is not one activity and then another and different one; it is one large activity out of which one part may not be separated without affecting the rest.

A related characteristic of the folk society was implied when it was declared that the specialized activities incident to the Papago war party obeyed fundamental principles understood by all. These "principles" had to do with the ends of living, as conceived by the Papago. A near-ultimate good for the Papago was the acquisition of supernatural power. This end was not questioned; it was a sort of axiom in terms of which many lesser activities were understood. This suggests that we may say of the folk society that its ends are taken as given. The activities incident to the war party may be regarded as merely complementarily useful acts, aspects of the division of labor. They may also, and more significantly, be seen as expressions of unquestioned common ends. The folk society exists not so much in the exchange of useful functions as in common understandings as to the ends given. The ends are not stated as matters of doctrine, but are implied by the many acts which make up the living that goes on in the society. Therefore, the morale of a folk society—its power to act consistently over periods of time and to meet crises effectively is not dependent upon discipline exerted by force or upon devotion to some single principle of action but to the concurrence and consistency of many or all of the actions and conceptions which make up the whole round of life. In the trite phrase, the folk society is a "design for living."

What is done in the ideal folk society is done not because somebody or some people decided, at once, that it should be done, but because it seems "necessarily" to flow from the very nature of things. There is, moreover, no disposition to reflect upon traditional acts and consider them objectively and critically. In short, behavior in the folk society is traditional, spontaneous, and uncritical. In any real folk society, of course, many things are done as a result of decision as to that particular action, but as to that class of actions tradition is the sufficient authority. The Indians decide now to go on a hunt; but it is not a matter of debate whether or not one should, from time to time, hunt.

The folkways are the ways that grow up out of long and intimate associa-

tion of men with each other; in the society of our conception all the ways are folkways. Men act with reference to each other by understandings which are tacit and traditional. There are no formal contracts or other agreements. The rights and obligations of the individual come about not by special arrangement; they are, chiefly, aspects of the position of the individual as a person of one sex or the other, one age-group or another, one occupational group or another, and as one occupying just that position in a system of relationships which are traditional in the society. The individual's status is thus in large part fixed at birth; it changes as he lives, but it changes in ways which were "foreordained" by the nature of his particular society. The institutions of the folk society are of the sort which has been called "crescive"; they are not of the sort that is created deliberately for special purposes, as was the juvenile court. So, too, law is made up of the traditional conceptions of rights and obligations and the customary procedures whereby these rights and obligations are assured; legislation has no part in it.

If legislation has no part in the law of the ideal folk society, neither has codification, still less jurisprudence. Radin has collected material suggesting the limited extent to which real primitive people do question custom and do systematize their knowledge. In the known folk societies they do these things only to a limited extent. In the ideal folk society there is no objectivity and no systematization of knowledge as guided by what seems to be its "internal" order. The member of this mentally constructed society does not stand off from his customary conduct and subject it to scrutiny apart from its meaning for him as that meaning is defined in culture. Nor is there any habitual exercise of classification, experiment, and abstraction for its own sake, least of all for the sake of intellectual ends. There is common practical knowledge, but there is no science.

Behavior in the folk society is highly conventional, custom fixes the rights and duties of individuals, and knowledge is not critically examined or objectively and systematically formulated; but it must not be supposed that primitive man is a sort of automaton in which custom is the mainspring. It would be as mistaken to think of primitive man as strongly aware that he is constrained by custom. Within the limits set by custom there is invitation to excel in performance. There is lively competition, a sense of opportunity, and a feeling that what the culture moves one to do is well worth doing. "There is no drabness in such a life. It has about it all the allurements of personal experience, very much one's own, of competitive skill, of things well done." The interrelations and high degree of consistency among the elements of custom which are presented to the individual declare to him

the importance of making his endeavors in the directions indicated by tradition. The culture sets goals which stimulate action by giving great meaning to it.

It has been said that the folk society is small and that its members have lived in long and intimate association with one another. It has also been said that in such societies there is little critical or abstract thinking. These characteristics are related to yet another characteristic of the folk society: behavior is personal, not impersonal. A "person" may be defined as that social object which I feel to respond to situations as I do, with all the sentiments and interests which I feel to be my own; a person is myself in another form, his qualities and values are inherent within him, and his significance for me is not merely one of utility. A "thing," on the other hand, is a social object which has no claim upon my sympathies, which responds to me, as I conceive it, mechanically; its value for me exists in so far as it serves my end. In the folk society all human beings admitted to the society are treated as persons; one does not deal impersonally ("thing-fashion") with any other participant in the little world of that society. Moreover, in the folk society much besides human beings is treated personally. The pattern of behavior which is first suggested by the inner experience of the individual—his wishes, fears, sensitivenesses, and interests of all sorts—is projected into all objects with which he comes into contact. Thus nature, too, is treated personally: the elements, the features of the landscape, the animals, and especially anything in the environment which by its appearance or behavior suggests that it has the attributes of mankind—to all these are attributed qualities of the human person.

In short, the personal and intimate life of the child in the family is extended, in the folk society, into the social world of the adult and even into inanimate objects. It is not merely that relations in such a society are personal; it is also that they are familial. The first contacts made as the infant becomes a person are with other persons; moreover, each of these first persons, he comes to learn, has a particular kind of relation to him which is associated with that one's genealogical position. The individual finds himself fixed within a constellation of familial relationships. The kinship connections provide a pattern in terms of which, in the ideal folk society, all personal relations are conventionalized and categorized. All relations are personal. But relations are not, in content of specific behavior, the same for everyone. As a mother is different from a father, and a grandson from a nephew, so are these classes of personal relationship, originating in genealogical connection, extended outward into all relationships whatever. In



this sense, the folk society is a familial society. Lowie has demonstrated the qualification that is to be introduced into the statement of Maine that the primitive society is organized in terms of kinship rather than territory. It is true that the fact that men are neighbors contributes to their sense of belonging together. But the point to be emphasized in understanding the folk society is that whether mere contiguity or relationship as brother or as son is the circumstance uniting men into the society, the result is a group of people among whom prevail the personal and categorized relationships that characterize families as we know them, and in which the patterns of kinship tend to be extended outward from the group of genealogically connected individuals into the whole society. The kin are the type persons for all experience.

This general conception may be resolved into component or related conceptions. In the folk society family relationships are clearly distinguished from one another. Very special sorts of behavior may be expected by a mother's brother of his sister's son, and this behavior will be different from that expected by a father's brother of his brother's son. Among certain Australian tribes animals killed by a hunter must be divided so that nine or ten certain parts must be given to nine or ten corresponding relatives of the successful hunter—the right ribs to the father's brother, a piece of the flank to the mother's brother, and so on. The tendency to extend kinship outward takes many special forms. In many primitive societies kinship terms and kinship behavior (in reduced degree) are extended to persons not known to be genealogically related at all, but who are nevertheless regarded as kin. Among the central Australians, terms of relationship are extended "so as to embrace all persons who come into social contact with one another. . . . In this way the whole society forms a body of relatives." In the folk society groupings which do not arise out of genealogical connection are few, and those that do exist tend to take on the attributes of kinship. Ritual kinship is common in primitive and peasant societies in the forms of blood brotherhood, godparental relationships, and other ceremonial sponsorships. These multiply kinship connections; in these cases the particular individuals to be united depend upon choice. Furthermore, there is frequently a recognizedly fictitious or metaphorical use of kinship terms to designate more casual relationships, as between host and guest or between worshipper and deity.

The real primitive and peasant societies differ very greatly as to the forms assumed by kinship. Nevertheless, it is possible to recognize two main types. In one of these the connection between husband and wife is emphasized,

while neither one of the lineages, matrilineal or patrilineal, is singled out as contrasted with the other. In such a folk society the individual parental family is the social unit, and connections with relatives outside this family are of secondary importance. Such family organization is common where the population is small, the means of livelihood are by precarious collection of wild food, and larger units cannot permanently remain together because the natural resources will not allow it. But where a somewhat larger population remains together, either in a village or in a migratory band, there often, although by no means always, is found an emphasis upon one line of consanguine connection rather than the other with subordination of the conjugal connection. There results a segmentation of the society into equivalent kinship units. These may take the form of extended domestic groups or joint families (as in China) or may include many households of persons related in part through recognized genealogical connection and in part through the sharing of the same name or other symbolic designation, in the latter case we speak of the groups as clans. Even in societies where the individual parental family is an independent economic unit, as in the case of the eastern Eskimo, husband and wife never become a new social and economic unit with the completeness that is characteristic of our own society. When a marriage in primitive society comes to an end, the kinsmen of the dead spouse assert upon his property a claim they have never given up. On the whole, we may think of the family among folk peoples as made up of persons consanguinely connected. Marriage is, in comparison with what we in our society directly experience, an incident in the life of the individual who is born, brought up, and dies with his blood kinsmen. In such a society romantic love can hardly be elevated to a major principle.

In so far as the consanguine lines are well defined (and in some cases both lines may be of importance to the individual) the folk society may be thought of as composed of families rather than of individuals. It is the familial groups that act and are acted upon. There is strong solidarity within the kinship group, and the individual is responsible to all his kin as they are responsible to him. "The clan is a natural mutual aid society. . . . A member belongs to the clan, he is not his own; if he is wrong, they will right him; if he does wrong, the responsibility is shared by them." Thus, in folk societies wherein the tendency to maintain consanguine connection has resulted in joint families or clans, it is usual to find that injuries done by an individual are regarded as injuries against his kinship group, and the group takes the steps to right the wrong. The step may be revenge regulated by custom or a property settlement. A considerable part of primitive law

exists in the regulation of claims by one body of kin against another. The fact that the folk society is an organization of families rather than an aggregation of individuals is further expressed in many of those forms of marriage in which a certain kind of relative is the approved spouse. The customs by which in many primitive societies a man is expected to marry his deceased brother's widow or a woman to marry her deceased sister's husband express the view of marriage as an undertaking between kinship groups. One of the spouses having failed by death, the undertaking is to be carried on by some other representative of the family group. Indeed, in the arrangements for marriage—the selection of spouses by their relatives, in brideprice, dowry, and in many forms of familial negotiations leading to a marriage—the nature of marriage as a connubial form of social relations between kindreds finds expression.

It has been said in foregoing paragraphs that behavior in the folk society is traditional, spontaneous, and uncritical, that what one man does is much the same as what another man does, and that the patterns of conduct are clear and remain constant throughout the generations. It has also been suggested that the congruence of all parts of conventional behavior and social institutions with each other contributes to the sense of rightness which the member of the folk society feels to inhere in his traditional ways of action. In the well-known language of Sumner, the ways of life are folkways; furthermore, the folkways tend to be also mores—ways of doing or thinking to which attach notions of moral worth. The value of every traditional act or object or institution is, thus, something which the members of the society are not disposed to call into question; and should the value be called into question, the doing so is resented. This characteristic of the folk society may be briefly referred to by saying that it is a sacred society. In the folk society one may not, without calling into effect negative social sanctions, challenge as valueless what has come to be traditional in that society.

Presumably, the sacredness of social objects has its source, in part, at least, in the mere fact of habituation; probably the individual organism becomes early adjusted to certain habits, motor and mental, and to certain associations between one activity and another or between certain sense experiences and certain activities, and it is almost physiologically uncomfortable to change or even to entertain the idea of change. There arises "a feeling of impropriety of certain forms, of a particular social or religious value, or a superstitious fear of change." Probably the sacredness of social objects in the folk society is related also to the fact that in such well-organized cultures acts and objects suggest the traditions, beliefs, and conceptions which all

share. There is reason to suppose that when what is traditionally done becomes less meaningful because people no longer know what the acts stand for, life becomes more secular. In the repetitious character of conventional action (aside from technical action) we have ritual; in its expressive character we have ceremony; in the folk society ritual tends also to be ceremonious, and ritual-ceremony tends to be sacred, not secular.

The sacredness of social objects is apparent in the ways in which, in the folk society, such an object is hedged around with restraints and protections that keep it away from the commonplace and the matter-of-fact. In the sacred there is alternatively, or in combination, holiness and dangerousness. When the Papago Indian returned from a successful war expedition, bringing the scalp of a slain Apache, the head-hairs of the enemy were treated as loaded with a tremendous "charge" of supernatural power; only old men, already successful warriors and purified through religious ritual, could touch the object and make it safe for incorporation into the home of the slayer. Made into the doll-like form of an Apache Indian, it was, at last, after much ceremonial preparation, held for an instant by the members of the slayer's family, addressed in respect and awe by kinship terms, and placed in the house, there to give off protective power. The Indians of San Pedro de la Laguna, Guatemala, recognize an officer, serving for life, whose function it is to keep custody of ten or a dozen Latin breviaries printed in the eighteenth century and to read prayers from one or another of these books on certain occasions. No one but this custodian may handle the books, save his assistants on ceremonial occasions, with his permission. Should anyone else touch a book he would go mad or be stricken with blindness. Incense and candles are burnt before the chest containing the books, yet the books are not gods—they are objects of sacredness.

In the folk society this disposition to regard objects as sacred extends, characteristically, even into the subsistence activities and into the foodstuffs of the people. Often the foodstuffs are personified as well as sacred. "My granduncle used to say to me," explained a Navajo Indian, "if you are walking along a trail and see a kernel of corn, pick it up. It is like a child lost and starving.' According to the legends corn is just the same as a human being, only it is holier. . . . When a man goes into a cornfield he feels that he is in a holy place, that he is walking among Holy People. . . . Agriculture is a holy occupation. Even before you plant you sing songs. You continue this during the whole time your crops are growing. You cannot help but feel that you are in a holy place when you go through your fields and they are doing well." In the folk society, ideally conceived, nothing is solely



a means to an immediate practical end. All activities, even the means of production, are ends in themselves, activities expressive of the ultimate values of the society.

### III

This characterization of the ideal folk society could be greatly extended. Various of the elements that make up the conception could be differently combined with one another, and this point or that could be developed or further emphasized and its relations shown to other aspects of the conception. For example, it might be pointed out that where there is little or no systematic and reflective thinking the customary solutions to problems of practical action only imperfectly take the form of really effective and understood control of the means appropriate to accomplish the desired end, and that, instead, they tend to express the states of mind of the individuals who want the end brought about and fear that it may not be. We say this briefly in declaring that the folk society is characterized by much magic, for we may understand "magic" to refer to action with regard to an end—to instrumental action—but only to such instrumental action as does not effectively bring about that end, or is not really understood in so far as it does, and which is expressive of the way the doer thinks and feels rather than adapted to accomplishing the end. "Magic is based on specific experience of emotional states . . . in which the truth is revealed not by reason but by the play of emotions upon the human organism . . . magic is founded on the belief that hope cannot fail nor desire deceive." In the folk society effective technical action is much mixed with magical activity. What is done tends to take the form of a little drama; it is a picture of what is desired.

The nature of the folk society could, indeed, be restated in the form of a description of the folk mind. This description would be largely a repetition of what has been written in foregoing pages, except that now the emphasis would be upon the characteristic mental activity of members of the folk society, rather than upon customs and institutions. The man of the folk society tends to make mental associations which are personal and emotional, rather than abstractly categoric or defined in terms of cause and effect. ". . . Primitive man views every action not only as adapted to its main object, every thought related to its main end, as we should perceive them, but . . . he associates them with other ideas, often of a religious or at least a symbolic nature. Thus he gives to them a higher significance than they seem to us to deserve." A very similar statement of this kind of think-

ing has been expressed in connection with the thinking of medieval man; the description would apply as well to man in the folk society:

From the causal point of view, symbolism appears as a sort of short-cut of thought. Instead of looking for the relation between two things by following the hidden detours of their causal connections, thought makes a leap and discovers their relation, not in a connection of cause or effects, but in a connection of signification or finality. Such a connection will at once appear convincing, provided only that the two things have an essential quality in common which can be referred to a general value. . . . Symbolic assimilation founded on common properties presupposes the idea that these properties are essential to things. The vision of white and red roses blooming among thorns at once calls up a symbolic association in the medieval mind: for example, that of virgins and martyrs, shining with glory, in the midst of their persecutors. The assimilation is produced because the attributes are the same: the beauty, the tenderness, the purity, the colours of the roses are also those of the virgins, their red color that of the blood of the martyrs. But this similarity will only have a mystic meaning if the middle-term connecting the two terms of the symbolic concept expresses an essentiality common to both; in other words, if redness and whiteness are something more than names for physical differences based on quantity, if they are conceived of as essences, as realities. The mind of the savage, of the child, and of the poet never sees them otherwise. [Huizinga.]

The tendency to treat nature personally has recognition in the literature as the "animistic" or "anthropomorphic" quality of primitive thinking, and the contrast between the means-ends pattern of thought more characteristic of modern urban man and the personal thought of primitive man has been specially investigated.

In the foregoing account no mention has been made of the absence of economic behavior characteristic of the market in the folk society. Within the ideal folk society members are bound by religious and kinship ties, and there is no place for the motive of commercial gain. There is no money and nothing is measured by any such common denominator of value. The distribution of goods and services tends to be an aspect of the conventional and personal relationships of status which make up the structure of the society: goods are exchanged as expressions of good will and, in large part, as incidents of ceremonial and ritual activities. "On the whole, then, the compulsion to work, to save, and to expend is given not so much by a rational appreciation of the [material] benefits to be received as by the desire for social recognition, through such behavior."

The conception sketched here takes on meaning if the folk society is seen in contrast to the modern city. The vast, complicated, and rapidly changing world in which the urbanite and even the urbanized country-dweller live today is enormously different from the small, inward-facing folk so-

ciety, with its well-integrated and little-changing moral and religious conceptions. At one time all men lived in these little folk societies. For many thousands of years men must have lived so; urbanized life began only very recently, as the long history of man on earth is considered, and the extreme development of a secularized and swift-changing world society is only a few generations old.

The tribal groups that still remain around the edges of expanding civilization are the small remainders of this primary state of living. Considering them one by one, and in comparison with the literate or semiliterate societies, the industrialized and the semi-industrialized societies, we may discover how each has developed forms of social life in accordance with its own special circumstances. Among the polar Eskimos, where each small family had to shift for itself in the rigors of the arctic environment, although the ties of kinship were of great importance, no clans or other large unilateral kinship groups came into existence. The sedentary Haida of the Queen Charlotte Islands were divided into two exogamous kinship groups, each composed of clans, with intense pride of descent and healthy rivalry between them. Among the warring and nomadic Comanche initiative and resourcefulness of the individual were looked on more favorably than among the sedentary and closely interdependent Zuñi. In West Africa great native states arose, with chiefs and courts and markets, yet the kinship organization remained strong; and in China we have an example of slow growth of a great society, with a literate élite, inclosing within it a multitude of village communities of the folk type. Where cities have arisen, the country people dependent on those cities have developed economic and political relationships, as well as relationships of status, with the city people, and so have become that special kind of rural folk we call peasantry. And even in the newer parts of the world, as in the United States, many a village or small town has, perhaps, as many points of resemblance with the folk society as with urban life.

Thus the societies of the world do not range themselves in the same order with regard to the degree to which they realize all of the characteristics of the ideal folk society. On the other hand, there is so marked a tendency for some of these characteristics to occur together with others that the interrelations among them must be in no small part that of interdependent variables. Indeed, some of the interrelations are so obvious that we feel no sense of problem. The smallness of the folk society and the long association together of the same individuals certainly is related to the prevailingly personal character of relationships. The fewness of secondary and tertiary tools and the absence of machine manufacture are circumstances obviously unfavorable to

a very complex division of labor. Many problems present themselves, however, as to the conditions in which certain of these characteristics do not occur in association, and as to the circumstances under which certain of them may be expected to change in the direction of their opposites, with or without influencing others to change also.

A study of the local differences in the festival of the patron village saint in certain communities of Yucatan indicates that some interrelationship exists in that case. In all four communities, differing as to their degrees of isolation from urban centers of modifying influence, the festival expresses a relationship between the village and its patron saint (or cross) which is annually renewed. In it a ritual and worship are combined with a considerable amount of play. The chief activities of the festival are a novena, a folk dance, and a rustic bullfight. In all four communities there is an organization of men and women who for that year undertake the leadership of the festival, handing over the responsibility to a corresponding group of successors at its culmination. So far the institution is the same in all the communities studied. The differences appear when the details of the ritual and play and of the festival organization are compared, and when the essential meanings of these acts and organizations are inquired into. Then it appears that from being an intensely sacred act, made by the village as a collectivity composed of familiarly defined component groups, with close relationship to the system of religious and moral understandings of the people, the festival becomes, in the more urbanized communities, chiefly an opportunity for recreation for some and of financial profit for others, with little reference to moral and religious conceptions.

In the most isolated and otherwise most folklike of the communities studied the organization of the festival is closely integrated with the whole social structure of the community. The hierarchy of leaders of the community, whose duties are both civil and religious, carry on the festival: It is the chiefs, the men who decide disputes and lead in warfare, who also take principal places in the religious processions and in the conduct of the ceremonies. The community, including several neighboring settlements, is divided into five groups, membership in which descends in the male line. The responsibility for leading the prayers and preparing the festival food rests in turn on four men chosen from each of the five groups. The festival is held at the head village, at the shrine housing the cross patron of the entire community. The festival consists chiefly of solemnly religious acts: masses, rosaries, procession of images, kneeling of worshippers. The ritual offerings are presented by a special officer, in all solemnity, to the patron cross; certain symbols of di-



vinity are brought from the temple and exposed to the kneeling people as the offerings are made. The transfer of the responsibility to lead the festival is attended by ceremony in an atmosphere of sanctity: certain ritual paraphernalia are first placed on the altar and then, after recitation of prayers and performance of a religious dance, are handed over, in view of all, from the custodians of the sacred charge for that year to their successors.

In the villages that are less isolated the festival is similar in form, but it is less well integrated with the social organization of the community, is less sacred, and allows for more individual enterprise and responsibility. These changes continue in the other communities studied, as one gets nearer to the city of Mérida. In certain seacoast villages the festival of the patron saint is a money-getting enterprise of a few secular-minded townspeople. The novena is in the hands of a few women who receive no help from the municipal authorities; the bullfight is a commercial entertainment, professional bullfighters being hired for the occasion and admission charged; the folk dance is little attended. The festival is enjoyed by young people who come to dance modern dances and to witness the bullfight, and it is an opportunity to the merchants to make a profit. What was an institution of folk culture has become a business enterprise in which individuals, as such, take part for secular ends.

The principal conclusion is that the less isolated and more heterogeneous communities of the peninsula of Yucatan are the more secular and individualistic and the more characterized by disorganization of culture. It further appeared probable that there was, in the changes taking place in Yucatan, a relation of interdependence among these changing characteristics, especially between the disorganization of culture and secularization. "People cease to believe because they cease to understand, and they cease to understand because they cease to do the things that express the understandings." New jobs and other changes in the division of labor bring it about that people cannot participate in the old rituals; and, ceasing to participate, they cease to share the values for which the rituals stood. This is, admittedly, however, only a part of the explanation.

The conception of the folk society has stimulated one small group of field workers to consider the interdependence or independence of these characteristics of society. In Yucatan isolation, homogeneity, a personal and "symbolic" view of nature, importance of familial relationships, a high degree of organization of culture, and sacredness of sanctions and institutions were all found in regular association with each other. It was then reported that in certain Indian communities on or near Lake Atitlán in Guatemala this association of characteristics is not repeated. As it appeared that these Guate-

malan communities were not in rapid change, but were persisting in their essential nature, the conclusion was reached that "a stable society can be small, unsophisticated, homogeneous in beliefs and practices," have a local, well-organized culture, and still be one "with relationships impersonal, with formal institutions dictating the acts of individuals, and with family organization weak, with life secularized, and with individuals acting more from economic or other personal advantage than from any deep conviction or thought of the social good." It was further pointed out that in these Guatemalan societies a "primitive world view," that is, a disposition to treat nature personally, to regard attributes as entities, and to make "symbolic" rather than causal connections, coexists with a tendency for relations between man and man to be impersonal, commercial, and secular, as they tend to be in the urban society.

These observations lead, in turn, to reconsideration of the circumstances tending to bring about one kind of society or one aspect of society rather than another. The breakdown of familial institutions in recent times in Western society is often ascribed to the development of the city and of modern industry. If, as has been reported, familial institutions are also weak in these Guatemalan villages, there must be alternative causes for the breakdown of the family to the rise of industry and the growth of the city, for these Guatemalan Indians live on or near their farms, practice a domestic handicraft manufacture, and have little or nothing to do with cities. It has been suggested that in the case of the Guatemalan societies the development, partly before the Conquest and partly afterward, of a pecuniary economy with a peddler's commerce, based on great regional division of labor, together with a system of regulations imposed by an élite with the use of force, may be the circumstances that have brought about reduction in the importance of familial institutions and individual independence, especially in matters of livelihood.

The secular character of life in these highland villages of the Lake Atitlán region is not so well established as is the individuated character of life, but if life is indeed secular there, it is a secularity that has developed without the influence of high personal mobility, of the machine, and of science. In a well-known essay Max Weber showed how capitalistic commercialism could and did get along with piety in the case of the Puritans. So it may appear that under certain conditions a literate and, indeed, at least partly urbanized society may be both highly commercial and sacred—as witness, also, the Jews—while under certain other conditions an otherwise folklike people may become individualistic, commercial, and perhaps secular. It is, of course, the determination of the limiting conditions that is important.

## OSCAR LEWIS

OSCAR LEWIS, who was born in New York City in 1914 and did his graduate work in anthropology at Columbia University, went to Tepoztlán, Mexico, in the 1940's, to conduct a "culture and personality" study of that village. He initially felt that the "culture" part of his task would be merely to bring up to date the earlier findings of Redfield. He soon discovered, however, that the assignment was larger than he had foreseen. This was partly owing to local changes that had taken place during seventeen years, but more importantly to the evolution during that period of anthropological knowledge and techniques and to the orientation of Lewis's own thinking. With more time, more assistants, and a battery of psychological testing methods (including the Rorschach) at his disposal—and after a closer examination of historical documents—Lewis was able appreciably to qualify the notion that tensions and anxieties, comparable to those of a large town, are absent from a so-called folk society. The burden of his conclusions is given in the following selections from *Life in a Mexican Village: Tepoztlán Restudied* (1951). This study, in which Lewis purports to combine "the historical, the functional, and the configurational points of view," is of great value for its broad conceptual framework and its methodology and for providing an intensive second look, after a considerable lapse of time, at an already studied community. One reviewer describes the book as unique among community studies "for its massing and interweaving of psychological information against a cultural panorama."

*Life in a Mexican Village*, which is dedicated to Robert Redfield, refines more than it contradicts the pioneer's insights, and Redfield has expressed himself grateful to Lewis for "correcting and greatly deepening" his original "sketch." In his recent *The Primitive World and Its Transformations* (1953), however, Redfield writes that "Dr. Lewis finds too much when he says my values . . . 'contain the old Rousseauian notion of primitive peoples as noble savages,' nor do I think that if he looks again he will find in my writings expression 'of the corollary that with civilization has come the fall of man.'" Redfield points out that Lewis, when he speaks of "improving" the conditions of life in such communities as Tepoztlán, brings his own values into his study. Redfield believes it inevitable and desirable that a social scientist's field work be informed by a set of values, and candidly states that he himself perceived and suggested to his readers "certain good things in Tepoztlán: a sense of conviction in the people as to what life is all about; and a richness of the expressive life of the community."



*LIFE IN A MEXICAN VILLAGE: TEPOZTLÁN RESTUDIED**Introduction*

In 1926 Robert Redfield, a young American anthropologist, first studied the village of Tepoztlán and gave us his pioneer work, *Tepoztlán—a Mexican Village*. This book has since become a standard reference and a classic in the field of community studies. It is of particular importance in the history of community studies in that it contains Redfield's first statement on the nature of the folk society, and, at least implicitly, the concept of the folk-urban continuum, a hypothesis of societal change later made explicit in *The Folk Culture of Yucatan*. The folk-urban conceptualization of culture change now enjoys great prestige among sociologists and anthropologists, and has served as the theoretical frame of reference for many of the community studies done by Redfield's students. . . .

Seventeen years after Redfield's study, I went to Tepoztlán to do a broad ethnographic and historical study of the social, economic, political, and religious life of the community, with special emphasis upon an analysis of the changes which had occurred in the village since 1926. This involved a re-study of the village and a comparison of our findings. Special attention, however, was given to those aspects of village life which Redfield had merely touched upon, such as demography, the land problem, systems of agriculture, the distribution of wealth, standards of living, politics and local government, the life cycle of the individual, and inter-personal relations. The bulk of the materials presented . . . [here] is therefore new data.

Upon my arrival in the village it seemed to be in many respects as Redfield had described it. In physical appearance it had changed but little. Once off the highway which runs to the plaza, there were the same unpaved streets and adobe houses, the barrio chapels, the people carrying water to their homes from the nearest fountain, the men wearing their ancient white *calzones*<sup>1</sup> and huaraches, the barefoot women with braids and long skirts. But signs of change could also be seen. There were the new asphalt road, the buses, the tourist cars, the Coca-Cola and aspirin signs, the Sinarquist placards on a roadside wall, the queue of women and children waiting to have their corn ground at the mills, the new stores and poolrooms in the plaza,

---

This selection has been reprinted from Oscar Lewis, *Life in a Mexican Village* (pp. xi-xiii, 13-17, 36-37, 427-440, 446-448, Copyright, 1951 by University of Illinois Press, Urbana, Ill.) by permission of the publisher.

<sup>1</sup> [Cotton trousers.]



and a few women with bobbed hair and high-heeled shoes. Moreover, school enrollment had increased from the "few score" of Redfield's time, to over six hundred, and the village had obtained *ejidos*<sup>2</sup> under the national *ejido* program.

What had really happened in these past seventeen years? How profound were these changes? How had native institutions been affected? What old problems had been resolved and what new problems had been created? To what extent had the villagers become incorporated into the main stream of national life? How did the increase in trade and the influx of wealth affect the cultural habits of the people, their standards of living, their aspirations, their thinking? In short, had the people and their way of life really changed?

These questions are of much more than local interest. The changes which had occurred in Tepoztlán were taking place over wide areas of Mexico and the world. It was hoped that an intensive study of a single village might enable us to get at some of the fundamental processes and principles of culture change, and at the same time be useful to administrators concerned with the task of carrying out welfare programs in the so-called backward areas of the world.

The conditions for such a study seemed especially propitious in Tepoztlán for a number of reasons. Most of the changes noted above had come after 1926. We could therefore use Redfield's study as a base line from which to measure and analyze these changes. We could also work with some of Redfield's informants and with others who had lived through this period. Here was an unusual opportunity for an anthropologist. . . .

### *Part I: The Village and Its Institutions*

#### CHAPTER I: THE SETTING

The village is large, spread out, and roughly rectangular in shape. It is approximately two kilometers in length and one and one-half in width. Although the village contains 662 house sites, it does not have the compact or crowded appearance of some Mexican towns. For the most part, the houses are separated from each other by gardens, patios, corrals, and sometimes *milpas*.<sup>3</sup> These are enclosed by low-lying stone walls which do not block the view from the street and which permit overhanging trees to shade the street. Only a few houses in the center are built contiguously in Spanish style and are enclosed by high, concealing walls.

<sup>2</sup> [Cooperative farms.]

<sup>3</sup> [Corn fields.]

Tepoztlán has the traditional square plaza around which are grouped the more important public buildings. On one side of the plaza is the small public park, complete with bandstand, shade trees, benches, and brick walks. The paved road, which runs along the other side of the park, ends at this point, and here, too, is the last stop on the bus line.

North of the park is the courthouse which houses the office of the president, secretary, and other local officials. A guard in soldier's uniform is frequently seen pacing up and down before the steps. The new school house was built next to the courthouse and is now one of the important edifices of the center. Between these two buildings and the plaza itself is the Portales, a semi-enclosed street where most of the stores and permanent vending places are located. The street has a roof supported by columns and provides merchants and buyers protection from the sun and rain. To the east is the large cathedral and convent, the most imposing and handsome buildings in the village. The convent is now a historical monument and is visited by tourists. Between the cathedral and the plaza is a row of whitewashed, flat-roofed stores. West of the plaza is a dirt road leading to the lower part of the village, to the cemetery, and to the village of Ixcatepec and more stores. The mills and some of the finer old houses of former *caciques*<sup>4</sup> are also located on the plaza.

This part of the village presents the appearance and some of the hustle and bustle of a town, but the streets off the center are uniformly quiet and rustic and stamp Tepoztlán as a rural village. But even the center does not give the impression of an active, thriving community. The park, plaza, and public buildings show evidence of chronic neglect. Only for the annual Carnival is the area well swept and the main fountain cleaned. The park is seldom occupied by the native population and, except when there are tourists, usually looks abandoned.

The stores are small and dark and have unattractive displays. On market days the few vendors and the small variety of goods available betray little commercial activity and a general air of decline. . . .

At night the village appears even less sophisticated than during the day because of the lack of public street lighting. When there is no moon it is difficult, even dangerous, to walk through the rough streets without a flashlight or candle. Normally only young men venture out at night. Most people retire early, and the streets are dark and quiet. During the day the village also tends to be quiet, but many sounds can be heard: voices from within the houses, children crying or playing, housewives slapping tortillas into

<sup>4</sup> [*Bosses.*]

shape, people and animals walking over the stones, church bells, buses honking and racing loudly along the main thorough-fare, and an occasional lone peddler crying his wares. At night the only sounds heard are the serenades of romantic youths, an occasional drunken peasant being taken home, and the animals. . . .

## CHAPTER II: THE VILLAGE AND THE WORLD OUTSIDE

If we were to ask almost any Tepoztecan adult for his conception of the geography of the world, we would find that it is vague and spotty and limited to only a few countries. He would know that there is a country called the United States which is close to Mexico and whose people are the light-skinned gringos who speak a different language, are Protestants, and manufacture machines. He knows that to the south of Mexico there are other countries like Guatemala which are Spanish speaking and Catholic. He also knows that some place in the world there is Spain, the land from which the *gachupines*<sup>5</sup> came. Many Tepozteicans know that in a distant land there is a city called Rome where the Pope, the "King of the Catholics," lives. Some have heard of Germany and Japan, the countries which were at war with the gringos.

In general their knowledge of peoples other than Mexicans is very slight. They think of any stranger who has a light complexion and blue eyes as a gringo or *norteamericano*. A German anthropologist who lived in the village was constantly referred to as a gringo. Tepozteicans have seen some Negroes and Chinese, the latter primarily as peddlers. Tepozteicans do not seem to be aware of nationality differences and simply call most strangers "foreigners"; even light-skinned native-born Mexicans from other states, cities, and towns are included in this classification.

Most Tepozteicans have never been beyond the borders of Mexico, but in recent years there have been some exceptions. During the last war about fifteen Tepoztecan men worked as laborers in the United States and all returned to the village. Among this group were some comparatively well-educated men who were able to express their impressions and experiences and did much to impart new information about the U.S.A. to the villagers. In addition, one Tepoztecan fought in the Mexican squadron which went to the Philippines and he, too, spoke of his experiences.

Tepozteicans have not escaped the repercussions of international events in recent years. World War II led to conscription, toward which Tepozteicans reacted negatively. During the first few months of our field work in the

<sup>5</sup> [A derogatory epithet for Spaniards.]

village in 1943-44 an incident occurred which illustrates the local attitude. The son of the president of the *municipio*<sup>6</sup> had been recruited and was on his way to Cuernavaca to report for duty. His bus was stopped and the boy was "kidnapped" by several men. It was common gossip that this act was planned by the boy's father, who, as a result of it, was imprisoned in Cuernavaca for some time. Federal troops were sent into the village and there was much tension among the people. However, the affair blew over, and the villagers resigned themselves to conscription and military training for their sons.

Another way in which current international events influence the village is in the intensified campaign of the Roman Catholic Church throughout the Catholic world. Acción Católica has almost doubled its membership in Tepoztlán since 1943 as a result of the increased activity of the church. The sermons of the priest sometimes include warnings against the threat of Communism, a theme which was also heard in the local church immediately after the Mexican Revolution and in the twenties. Other than this, most Tepoztecos have no information about international trends or problems; they are ignorant of the United Nations, the Marshall Plan, the Atlantic Pact, and even of national loans. . . .

### *Summary and Conclusions*

This study represents one of the few restudies of a community, in the field of anthropology. The reader who is familiar with the earlier study of Tepoztlán by Robert Redfield will want to know how our findings compare. Such a comparison is made here, not only for a better understanding of Tepoztlán, but also for its broader implications for anthropological method and theory. The questions are: To what extent and in what ways do the results obtained from the independent study of the same society by two anthropologists differ? What are the implications of such differences concerning the reliability and validity of anthropological reporting?

Anthropologists, who like to think that there is an element of science in the social sciences, including anthropology, have often called primitive societies the "laboratory" of the social scientists, where hypotheses about the nature of man and society can be tested. While the experiments and observations of the natural scientist are generally repeated and checked independently by different observers, the reports of anthropologists have to be accepted on their face value, and their reliability has to be judged in terms of

<sup>6</sup> [Township.]



the respect for and confidence in the author's integrity, the inner consistency of his work, and the extent to which it agrees with one's own preconceptions. If the analogy with the natural sciences is to be taken seriously, we must develop methods for checking the reliability of our observations and the validity of interpretation. Restudy is one such method. . . .

#### COMPARISON WITH REDFIELD'S FINDINGS

As has already been pointed out, our study of Tepoztlán was not originally intended as a restudy of Redfield's work but rather as a continuation of it. When the study was begun I did not anticipate that there would be any fundamental differences between our findings. In the course of the work, however, many differences did emerge. These differences range from discrepancies in factual details to differences in the over-all view of Tepoztecan society and its people. . . . Here I will sum up some of the broader and more fundamental differences in the findings of the two studies.

The impression given by Redfield's study of Tepoztlán is that of a relatively homogeneous, isolated, smoothly functioning, and well-integrated society made up of a contented and well-adjusted people. His picture of the village has a Rousseauan quality which glosses lightly over evidence of violence, disruption, cruelty, disease, suffering, and maladjustment. We are told little of poverty, economic problems, or political schisms. Throughout his study we find an emphasis upon the cooperative and unifying factors in Tepoztecan society. Our findings, on the other hand, would emphasize the underlying individualism of Tepoztecan institutions and character, the lack of cooperation, the tensions between villages within the municipio, the schisms within the village, and the pervading quality of fear, envy, and distrust in inter-personal relations.

Now let us consider some of these differences in more detail. Redfield's account of Tepoztlán stresses the role of the communal lands as a unifying factor within the village and municipio. While this is certainly true it is only part of the story. With the single exception of church lands, communal lands were and are individually operated, and the ideal of every Tepoztecan is to own his private plot of land. Furthermore, the communal lands have been a source of inter-village quarrels, and during the year that Redfield was in Tepoztlán these quarrels resulted in violence. . . .

Redfield presented only the positive and formal aspects of inter-personal relations, such as forms of greeting and the respect-relations of *compadres*; <sup>7</sup> he failed to deal with some of the negative and disruptive aspects of village

<sup>7</sup> ["Co-parents," or godparents.]

life, such as the fairly high incidence of stealing, quarrels, and physical violence. An examination of the local records revealed that in the year that Redfield lived in the village there were 175 reported cases of crime and misdemeanors in the local court. Most of these cases were offenses against persons and property. Since not all cases reach the local authorities, this number is indicative of considerable conflict.

Redfield described local politics as a game, but we found that politics was a very serious affair which frequently led to violence. The year Redfield was there, the political schisms culminated in open violence bordering on civil war, and it was this situation which finally resulted in Redfield's leaving the village.

Another important difference between our findings concerns Redfield's delineation of the social structure of the village in terms of what he called the *tontos*, or representatives of folk culture, and the *correctos*, or representatives of city ways. It should be pointed out that Tepoztecan do not conceive of these terms as designations of social classes, in the sense used by Redfield, nor did they twenty years ago. Tepoztecan use the words as descriptive adjectives, with *tonto* meaning stupid, backward, foolish, or ignorant, and with *correcto* meaning well-mannered, well-bred, proper, or correct. The poorest, least educated, and most conservative man may be *correcto* to a Tepoztecan if he is polite and behaves in the accepted manner. Similarly, a well-educated, acculturated man may be called *tonto* if he permits himself to be fooled by others or dominated by his wife. Within any one family, some of the members may be considered *tonto* and others *correcto*, depending almost entirely upon personality traits and manners.

But granting that the degree of exposure to and influence of city ways is an important criterion in making for status differences in Tepoztlán, it is by no means the only one, and certainly not the most significant one in terms of the actual operation of the many status distinctions in the village. Among status distinctions which were then, and are today, more meaningful to Tepoztecan are those of rich and poor, landowners and landless, owners of private lands and holders of *ejidos*, *ejidatarios* and *comuneros*,<sup>8</sup> farmers in hoe culture and farmers in plow culture, sons of *caciques* and sons of ex-Zapatistas, to mention but a few. . . .

The use of the terms "*tonto*" and "*correcto*" to designate social groups, which did not and do not exist and operate as such, makes much of Redfield's analysis of Tepoztecan society oversimplified, schematic, and unreal. We found a much wider range of custom and belief among the so-called

<sup>8</sup> [Types of cooperative farmers.]

"*tontos*" than was reported by Redfield, and by the same token there was less of a gap between the *tontos* and *correctos*. While Redfield's concept would tend to make for two cultures, we see Tepoztlán as a single culture, with more and less acculturated individuals in close and frequent contact, each influencing the other, as they have for the past four hundred years.

#### IMPLICATIONS OF OUR DIFFERENCES

More important than the differences in our findings is the question of how to explain these differences. I suppose that in a sense it is inevitable that different students studying the same society will arrive at different conclusions. Certainly the personal factor, and what Redfield has recently referred to as the element of art in social science, cannot be overlooked. Nevertheless the differences in our findings on Tepoztlán are of such magnitude as to demand some further and more detailed explanation.

Some of the differences in our data can be explained by changes which have occurred in the village in the interim of nearly twenty years between our studies. . . . Other differences result from the difference in the general scope of the two studies. This study had the advantage of having Redfield's pioneer work to start with, the assistance of Mexican personnel, more than twice the amount of time for field work, and the development, during the past twenty years, of new approaches and methods, especially in the field of culture and personality. The much greater emphasis upon economic analysis in this study also reflects a fairly recent trend in anthropology. In addition, the fact that this study was based on the testimony of well over one hundred informants, as compared to about a half-dozen used by Redfield, revealed a wide range of individual differences and enabled more thorough checking of data.

Still other differences . . . must be attributed for the most part to differences in theoretical orientation and methodology which in turn influenced the selection and coverage of facts and the way in which these facts were organized. In rereading Redfield's study in the light of my own work in the village, it seems to me that the concept of the folk-culture and folk-urban continuum was Redfield's organizing principle in the research. Perhaps this helps to explain his emphasis on the formal and ritualistic aspects of life rather than the everyday life of the people and their problems, on evidence of homogeneity rather than heterogeneity and the range of custom, on the weight of tradition rather than deviation and innovation, on unity and integration rather than tensions and conflict.

Redfield's interest was primarily in the study of a single cultural process: the evolution from folk to urban, rather than a well-rounded ethnographic account. He only incidentally considered Tepoztlán in its historical, geographical, and cultural context in Morelos and Mexico, and attempted rather to place Tepoztlán within the broader, more abstract context of the folk-urban continuum.

The questions he asked of his data were quite different from those asked in this study. For example, unlike the present study, he was not concerned with determining just what Tepoztlán is typical of in relation to rural Mexico; nor was he concerned with determining how a study of Tepoztlán might reveal some of the underlying characteristics and problems of Mexico as a whole. Thus, the Revolution in Tepoztlán is not analyzed in terms of its social, economic, and political effects upon the village, nor in terms of what light it might throw upon the nature of the Revolution as a whole, but rather in regard to the more limited question of the emergence of Zapata as a "folk hero."

#### CRITIQUE OF REDFIELD'S CONCEPT OF FOLK-URBAN CONTINUUM

Since the concept of the folk society as an ideal type is, after all, a matter of definition,<sup>9</sup> there can be no quarrel with it as such, provided that it can be shown to have heuristic value. On the basis of our study of Tepoztlán, however, I should like to point out a number of limitations I have found in the conceptual framework of the folk-urban continuum, both as a scheme for the study of culture change and for cultural analysis. These criticisms can be discussed under six related points.

(1) The folk-urban conceptualization of social change focuses attention primarily on the city as the source of change, to the exclusion or neglect of other factors of an internal or external nature. So-called folk societies have been influencing each other for hundreds of years and out of such interaction has come cultural change. . . . [The] archaeological record in Tepoztlán, as well as in other parts of Mexico, indicates quite clearly a great mingling of peoples and cultures, which dates back at least a thousand years

<sup>9</sup> It should be noted that Redfield's use of the term "folk" and "folk society" has not always been consistent. In the study of Tepoztlán, he used it sometimes in a non-technical and popular sense, as when he speaks of folk dances, folk music, and folklore. (Redfield, *Tepoztlán*, p. 173). But for the most part he defines the folk society as an intermediate stage between the truly primitive tribe and the urban community. This position was also taken in his article on "The Folk Society and Culture" in 1940. But in 1947, in another article ("The Folk Society," *American Journal of Sociology*, p. 293) he sets up the folk society as an ideal type which includes the primitive tribal society.



before the Spanish Conquest. Tepoztlán itself was first conquered by the Toltecs and later by the Aztecs, and with each conquest came new influences, new religious ideas, and new customs.

Another example of non-urban factors in culture change can be seen in the case of Tepoztlán and other parts of Latin America, where the introduction of rural culture elements was at least as far reaching in effect as any changes brought about by later urban influence. Similarly, we find that the Mexican Agrarian Revolution (particularly in its Zapatista phase) was a profound influence for change, but can hardly be classified as an urban influence. It is evident that the folk-urban continuum concept deals with only one of a wide variety of situations which may lead to culture change. In the case of Tepoztlán, to study the urban factors alone would give us only a partial picture of culture change.

(2) It follows that in many instances culture change may not be a matter of a folk-urban progression, but rather an increasing or decreasing heterogeneity of culture elements. For example . . . the incorporation of Spanish rural elements, such as the plow, oxen, plants, and many folk beliefs, did not make Tepoztlán more urban, but rather gave it a more varied rural culture. The introduction of plow culture in Tepoztlán did not eliminate the older system of hoe culture but gave the Tepoztecs an alternative and, in some ways, more efficient method of farming, making for greater heterogeneity in the economic life and in the forms of social relationships.

(3) Some of the criteria used in the definition of the folk society are treated by Redfield as linked or interdependent variables, but might better be treated as independent variables. Sol Tax, in his study of Guatemalan societies, has shown that societies can be both culturally well organized and homogeneous and, at the same time, highly secular, individualistic, and commercialistic. He has also shown that inter-personal relations in a small and homogeneous society can be characterized by formalism and impersonality. His findings are supported by our Tepoztecan study. Moreover, our study shows other possible combinations of variables. Thus, whereas Tax found family disorganization as a concomitant of commercialism, in Tepoztlán the family remains strong, and there is little evidence of family disorganization. Moreover, collective forms of land tenure exist side by side with private land-ownership and individual working of the land.

(4) The typology involved in the folk-urban classification of societies tends to obscure one of the most significant findings of modern cultural anthropology, namely, the wide range in the ways of life and in the value systems among so-called primitive peoples. The folk society as used by Redfield

would group together food-gathering, hunting, pastoral, and agricultural peoples, without distinction. Similarly, it would put into one category societies which are as different culturally and psychologically as the Arunta and the Eskimo, the Dobu and the Ba Thonga, the Zuñi and the Alorese, the Dahomey and the Navaho. Indeed, one might argue that the folk-urban classification is not a cultural classification at all since it rides roughshod over fundamental cultural differences, i.e., differences in the ethos of a people. The point is that the attitudes and value systems of folk societies may resemble some urban societies much more than other folk societies. For example, the individualism and competitiveness of the Blackfoot Indians remind one much more of American urban value systems than those of the Zuñi. This suggests that the criteria used in the folk-urban classification are concerned with the purely formal aspects of society and are not the most crucial for cultural analysis.

What has been said of the folk end of the folk-urban formula applies also to the urban end. Focusing only on the formal aspects of urban society reduces all urban societies to a common denominator and treats them as if they all had the same culture. Thus Greek, Egyptian, Roman, Medieval, twentieth-century American and Russian cities would all be put into the same class. To take but one example, there are obvious and significant differences between American and Russian urban culture, and in all probability these two "urban influences" would have a very different effect upon a preliterate society exposed to them.

It should be clear that the concept "urban" is too much of a catchall to be useful for cultural analysis. Moreover, it is suggested here that the question posed by Redfield, namely, what happens to an isolated homogeneous society when it comes into contact with an urbanized society, cannot possibly be answered in a scientific way, because the question is too general and the terms used do not give us the necessary data. What we need to know is what kind of an urban society, under what conditions of contact, and a host of other specific historical data.

(5) The folk-urban classification has serious limitations in guiding field research because of the highly selective implications of the categories themselves and the rather narrow focus of the problem. The emphasis upon essentially formal aspects of culture leads to neglect of psychological data and, as a rule, does not give insight into the character of the people. We have already shown how this approach has influenced the selection, interpretation, and organization of the data in Redfield's study of Tepoztlán.

(6) Finally, underlying the folk-urban dichotomy as used by Redfield, is

a system of value judgments which contains the old Rousseauian notion of primitive peoples as noble savages, and the corollary that with civilization has come the fall of man. Again and again in Redfield's writings there emerges the value judgment that folk societies are good and urban societies bad. It is assumed that all folk societies are integrated while urban societies are the great disorganizing force. . . . In another essay ("The Folk Society and Culture" in *Eleven Twenty-six*), he contrasts the "organization and consistency which gives a group moral solidarity" with "the impaired moral organization of the urban society." Even in his most recent study, which to this writer represents a great departure from his earlier thinking, in that he is less concerned with formalism and categories and more concerned with people, we find the old values reappearing. "Progress" and urbanization now are seen as inevitable, but they are still evil.

Having pointed out some of the limitations of the folk-urban formula let us now see to what extent the trend of change found in our study of Tepoztlán falls within the categories suggested by Redfield in his study *The Folk Culture of Yucatan*. He postulates that with increased urban influences there is greater disorganization, secularization, and individualization. Taking each separately, we shall consider the family first, as an example of disorganization. Redfield summarized the broad trends of change in family organization as follows:

As one goes from Tusik [village] toward Mérida [city] there is to be noted a reduction in the stability of the elementary family; a decline in the manifestation of patriarchal or matriarchal authority; a disappearance of institutions expressing cohesion in the great family; a reduction in the strength and importance of respect relationships, especially for elder brothers and for elder people generally; an increasing vagueness of the conventional outlines of appropriate behavior toward relatives; and a shrinkage in the applicability of kinship terms primarily denoting members of the elementary family toward more distant relatives or toward persons not relatives.

The first generalization that can be made in the case of Tepoztlán is that, despite the increased city influences in the last seventeen years, the stability of the nuclear family has not been seriously modified. The family remains strong and cohesive, separations have not noticeably increased, and divorce is all but non-existent. The extended family is relatively weak but continues to serve in cases of emergency. This weakness, however, is not a recent phenomenon. Quarrels between husband and wife and wife-beating occur with some frequency, but this too seems to be an old pattern. The tensions and quarrels within families reflect a type of family organization, as well as

Tepoztecan personality, but are not necessarily symptoms of disorganization.

Parental authority remains strong in Tepoztlán, despite the elimination of arranged marriages and the increase in elopements. Parents continue to have control over their children, in many cases even after marriage. . . .

Although about fifty per cent of the marriages now begin as elopements, which flout the authority of the parents, the old form of asking for the girl's hand by the boy's parents continues. In any case, elopements do not lead to disorganization, for most elopements end in marriage, and the couple make peace with their parents. Assuming that elopements are an old trait, as seems to be indicated, here we have a case in which urban influence has intensified an old trait rather than caused its breakdown. . . .

The desire of young couples to become independent of their parents and to set up their own homes, which has been indicated earlier, reflects a greater individualism but does not necessarily imply a breakdown in family life. On the contrary, the lesser role of the in-laws and the greater dependence of the husband and wife upon each other, plus the fact that they are each of their own choice, may make for better marriage relations and greater family stability. . . .

In the examples cited, it is clear that changes have occurred in the village, but these changes do not necessarily imply disorganization. Rather, they involve a new kind of organization or reorganization.

The second conclusion in the study in Yucatán showed a clear trend toward secularization.

The conclusion has been reached that the city and town exhibit greater secularization than do the villages. The principal facts offered in support of this conclusion are . . . the separation of maize from the context of religion and its treatment simply as a means of getting food or money; the increase in the number of specialists who carry on their activities for a practical livelihood relative to those that carry on traditional activities which are regarded as prerogatives and even moral duties to the community; the change in the character of the institution of *guardia* whereby from being an obligation, religiously supported, to protect a shrine and a god it becomes a mere job in the town hall; the (almost complete) disappearance of family worship; the decline in the sacramental character of baptism and marriage; the conversion of the pagan cult from what is truly religious worship to mere magic or even superstition; the decline in the veneration accorded the *santos*; the change in the novena in which from being a traditional form expressive of appeal to deity it becomes a party for the fun of the participants; the alteration in the festival of the patron saint in which it loses its predominant character as worship and becomes play and an opportunity for profit; the separation of ideas as to the cause and cure of sickness from conceptions as to moral or religious obligation.



The data from Tepoztlán does not enable a careful comparison on each of the cited points. However, much of the data is comparable and shows the trend toward secularization noted. The attitude toward corn in Tepoztlán combines both the secular and religious. Certainly corn is viewed as the basic crop, both for subsistence and for trade. But the religious aspects have not been entirely lopped off. The corn is still blessed in the church on San Isidro's day, and some families still burn incense in the home and address a prayer to the corn before planting. Some also make the sign of the cross when planting the first seed. Moreover, on the day of San Miguel, crosses are still placed at the four corners of the milpa to ward off the winds. From informants' accounts, it appears that these customs were more widespread before the Revolution. It is difficult to say how much change has occurred since 1926, for Redfield did not report on this subject.

The study of occupational changes and division of labor in Tepoztlán showed that most of the old "folk specialists" have continued and even increased in number, side by side with the increase in the new specialists. There were more *curanderos*, *chirimiteros*, fireworks makers and mask makers, in 1944 than in 1926, and there seemed to be every indication that these occupations would continue. . . . However, the rate of increase in what Redfield would call the secular specialists has been much greater than that of the "folk specialists." To this extent the independent findings for Yucatán and Tepoztlán agree. But it should be noted that before the Revolution there were more shoemakers, carpenters, saddle makers, and other artisans than in 1926 or in 1944. Were it not that we had specific historical information to explain this phenomenon, we might conclude that with increasing urban contacts there is a decrease in the number of specialists. The reason for this decrease has been, rather, the destruction of many neighboring haciendas which were formerly supplied by labor from Tepoztlán, and the abolition of the *cacique* class which offered a market for the products of the artisans.

In Tepoztlán there does not appear to have been any appreciable decline in the sacramental character of baptism and marriage. At any rate, both are considered important and are standard practices. Despite the legalization of secular marriage, church marriage is still considered the best marriage by most Tepoztecs.

Similarly there is no evidence of any decline in the veneration of the *santos*; the novena continues to be an appeal to the deity rather than a party for fun; the patron saints of the barrios are still regarded as protectors and are worshipped as such. Nor have barrio fiestas become primarily an occa-

sion for profit. In fact, Tepoztecs do not show the marked commercial spirit reported in Mitla by Parsons, and in communities of the Guatemalan highlands by Sol Tax. Unlike Parsons' experiences in Mitla, we were never besieged by questions about the cost of things, nor did we ever witness Tepoztecs haggling among themselves or with strangers.

The third conclusion of the Yucatán study pertains to the trend toward individualization, or individualism as one goes from folk to urban. The specific facts found in the study of the four communities are given as follows:

. . . The relative decrease in importance of specialized functions which are performed in behalf of the community and the relative increase of specialties discharged for the individual's own benefit; the development of individual rights in land and in family estates; the diminution or disappearance of collective labor and of the exchange of services in connection with civic enterprises and religious worship; the decreasing concern of the family or of the local community in the making and the maintaining of marriages; the becoming less common of the extended domestic family; the lessening of emphasis and of conventional definition of the respect relationships among kin; the decline in family worship and the disappearance of religious symbols expressive of the great family; decrease in the tendency to extend kinship terms with primary significance for members of the elementary family to more remote relatives or to persons unrelated genealogically; the increasing vagueness of the conventional outlines of appropriate behavior towards relatives; the change in the nature of the marriage and baptismal rites so as less to express the linkage of the families and more to concern the immediate involved individuals only; the decline in relative importance of the santo patron of the local community; the suggested relation of the increase in sorcery to the separation of individuals, especially of women from the security of familial groups.

Some of the items listed above were also listed under the categories of disorganization and secularization and have been treated earlier. The development of individual rights in land may date back prior to the Spanish Conquest. Cortés and his heirs owned land in Tepoztlán and rented it out to Tepoztecs as early as 1580. In the past twenty or thirty years there have been no changes in the direction of the private ownership of the communal resources. The persistence of the communal resources, which still accounts for over eighty per cent of all the area of the municipio, is impressive.

The trend toward the breakdown of collective labor is seen clearly in Tepoztlán, particularly in connection with the difficulty in getting barrio members to turn out for the plowing and planting of the barrio fields. In 1947, three of the barrios had rented out the land and used the rental for the barrio. On the whole, many of our findings for Tepoztlán might be interpreted as confirming Redfield's more general findings for Yucatán, particu-

larly in regard to the trend toward secularization and individualization, perhaps less so in regard to disorganization. . . .

During the nineteenth century most of the changes in the village were in the form of an increasing urbanization of the upper class in the village. However, the more urban culture of this group did not spread widely to the mass of the population primarily because most of the traits were of no practical use and were economically out of their reach. Moreover, unlike the colonial period, there was no new group in the village which stood to benefit by spreading new traits. The only exception to this was a small movement to increase literacy.

The major characteristics of the acculturation process since the Revolution were the increased contacts with the outside, the breakdown of the internal barriers to social mobility, the increase in wealth. In contrast to the colonial period, in which the work of men was primarily affected, it was the work of the women that was affected in this period, by the corn mills, the sewing machines, and the bus lines.

#### IMPLICATIONS OF CHANGE

What are the implications of the total findings of this study for administrators, social scientists, and others concerned with the problem of improving life in communities like Tepoztlán? In the first place, it is important to recognize that Tepoztecs do not have many of the problems which beset our own modern industrial civilization. In Tepoztlán there is little exploitation of man by man; no single individual or group has power over others. Indeed, the lust for power and prestige motivates few people in this village. Nor are the anxieties and frustrations those which come from living in a highly competitive society, in which the fetish of personal success places a great burden upon the individual.

But Tepoztecs have their own problems. Their agricultural resources are limited and of poor quality, their technology is backward, and their productivity low. Less than forty per cent are landowners, and holdings are much too small to support a higher standard of living. Moreover, there is no new land available, since the village is surrounded by other municipios with similar problems. It should be emphasized that, on the whole, Tepoztecs have a profound knowledge of their physical environment and have made as good an adjustment to it as might be expected. They are familiar with the advantages of crop rotation and practice it to the extent to which the size of their landholdings permit. They also know the benefits of letting land lie fallow, but again the majority of families do not have sufficient land to practice it. An ancient form of terracing is used to prevent soil erosion, but

this is only partially effective, and erosion continues. Perhaps the most important improvement in agriculture would be the use of commercial fertilizer. Corn production could be doubled in many instances, but the high price of fertilizer makes this a difficult innovation. Irrigation and insect control would also be of great benefit to Tepoztlán.

The prospects of solving the agricultural problems through mechanization are slight. The rough and hilly terrain rules out the use of tractors and the very small size of holdings would make it uneconomical. In fact, even plow culture is becoming a burden because of the increased need of capital. As we have seen, some Tepoztecs are turning to the more primitive system of hillside hoe culture in order to avoid the rising costs of the recent inflationary period. But this system is an anachronism in the modern scene. It is further depleting the communal resources and cannot support an expanding population with a higher standard of living. Although the *ejido* program has helped to relieve the agrarian problem it has by no means solved it in Tepoztlán. It is difficult to see how the standard of living can be appreciably raised in such an environment. As the means of communication improve and the aspirations of the people rise, the move to the city will in all probability increase. That this has not occurred on a larger scale before this is an interesting commentary on the Tepoztec character. Most of the young people are still quite provincial and fear the dangers of the outside world.

Given the objective limitation of Tepoztec economy and environment, their history of colonial status over a three-hundred-year period, the instability and chicanery of Mexican politics, and the unplanned and haphazard nature of social change due to urban influence, we can better understand the psychology and world view of the Tepoztecs. It is a psychology of living with problems rather than solving them, of constantly adjusting to difficulties rather than eliminating them.

We have seen that in the increased contact with the outside world in recent years, Tepoztecs have taken many new traits of modern life. They now have Coca-Cola, aspirin, radios, sewing machines, phonographs, pool-rooms, flashlights, clocks, steel plows, and some labor saving devices. They also have a greater desire to attend school, to eat better, to dress better, and to spend more. But in many ways their world view is still closer to sixteenth-century Spain and to pre-Hispanic Mexico than to the modern scientific world. They are still guided by superstition and primitive beliefs; sorcery, magic, evil winds, and spirits still dominate their thinking. It is clear that, for the most part, they have taken on only the more superficial aspects and values of modern life. Can western civilization offer them no more?



## EDWARD SAPIR

IN the following selection, originally published as an article in the *American Journal of Sociology* (1924), Edward Sapir, anthropologist and student of linguistics, attempts to explore, not necessarily as a social scientist but as a cultivated man, the prerequisite qualities of a culture capable of sustaining and nourishing civilized life. He finds that a "genuine" culture, a true community, is not dependent upon high levels of skill nor upon degrees of complexity, nor upon its ability to control physical environment, although all these things may be present. Rather he identifies as genuine that culture in which all modes of human activity are harmonized to produce a world of individually significant, yet commonly shared, experiences.



### CULTURE, GENUINE AND SPURIOUS

#### I. THE VARYING CONCEPTIONS OF CULTURE

There are certain terms that have a peculiar property. Ostensibly, they mark off specific concepts, concepts that lay claim to a rigorously objective validity. In practice, they label vague terrains of thought that shift or narrow or widen with the point of view of who makes use of them, embracing within their gamut of significances conceptions that not only do not harmonize but are in part contradictory. An analysis of such terms soon discloses the fact that underneath the clash of varying contents there is a unifying feeling-tone. What makes it possible for so discordant an array of conceptions to answer to the same call is, indeed, precisely this relatively constant halo that surrounds them. Thus, what is "crime" to one man is "nobility" to another, yet both are agreed that crime, whatever it is, is an undesirable category, that nobility, whatever it is, is an estimable one. In the same way, such a term as art may be made to mean divers things, but whatever it means, the term itself demands respectful attention and calls forth, normally, a pleasantly polished state of mind, an expectation of lofty satisfactions. If the particular conception of art that is advanced or that is implied in a work of art is distasteful to us, we do not express our dissatisfaction by saying "Then I don't like art." We say this only

---

This selection has been reprinted from Edward Sapir, "Culture, Genuine and Spurious," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 29 (Jan., 1924), pp. 401-429, by permission of the publisher.

when we are in a vandalic frame of mind. Ordinarily we get around the difficulty by saying, "But that's not art, it's only pretty-pretty conventionality," or "It's mere sentimentality," or "It's nothing but raw experience, material for art, but not art." We disagree on the value of things and the relations of things, but often enough we agree on the particular value of a label. It is only when the question arises of just where to put the label, that trouble begins. These labels—perhaps we had better call them empty thrones—are enemies of mankind, yet we have no recourse but to make peace with them. We do this by seating our favorite pretenders. The rival pretenders war to the death; the thrones to which they aspire remain serenely splendid.

I desire to advance the claims of a pretender to the throne called "culture." Whatever culture is, we know that it is, or is considered to be, a good thing. I propose to give my idea of what kind of a good thing culture is.

The word "culture" seems to be used in three main senses or groups of senses. First of all, culture is technically used by the ethnologist and culture-historian to embody any socially inherited element in the life of man, material and spiritual. Culture so defined is coterminous with man himself, for even the lowliest savages live in a social word characterized by a complex network of traditionally conserved habits, usages, and attitudes. The South African Bushman's method of hunting game, the belief of the North American Indian in "medicine," the Periclean Athenian's type of tragic drama, and the electric dynamo of modern industrialism are all, equally and indifferently, elements of culture, each being an outgrowth of the collective spiritual effort of man, each being retained for a given time not as the direct and automatic resultant of purely hereditary qualities but by means of the more or less consciously imitative processes summarized by the terms "tradition" and "social inheritance." From this standpoint all human beings or, at any rate, all human groups are cultured, though in vastly different manners and grades of complexity. For the ethnologist there are many types of culture and an infinite variety of elements of culture, but no values, in the ordinary sense of the word, attach to these. His "higher" and "lower," if he uses the terms at all, refer not to a moral scale of values but to stages, real or supposed, in a historic progression or in an evolutionary scheme. I do not intend to use the term "culture" in this technical sense. "Civilization" would be a convenient substitute for it, were it not by common usage limited rather to the more complex and sophisticated forms of the stream of culture. To avoid confusion with other uses of the word "culture," uses which emphatically involve the application of a scale of values, I shall, where necessary, use "civilization" in lieu of the ethnologist's "culture."

The second application of the term is more widely current. It refers to a

rather conventional ideal of individual refinement, built up on a certain modicum of assimilated knowledge and experience but made up chiefly of a set of typical reactions that have the sanction of a class and of a tradition of long standing. Sophistication in the realm of intellectual goods is demanded of the applicant to the title of "cultured person," but only up to a certain point. Far more emphasis is placed upon manner, a certain preciousness of conduct which takes different colors according to the nature of the personality that has assimilated the "cultured" ideal. At its worst, the preciousness degenerates into a scornful aloofness from the manners and tastes of the crowd; this is the well-known cultural snobbishness. At its most subtle, it develops into a mild and whimsical vein of cynicism, an amused skepticism that would not for the world find itself betrayed into an unwonted enthusiasm; this type of cultured manner presents a more engaging countenance to the crowd, which only rarely gets hints of the discomfiting play of its irony, but it is an attitude of perhaps even more radical aloofness than snobbishness outright. Aloofness of some kind is generally a *sine qua non* of the second type of culture. Another of its indispensable requisites is intimate contact with the past. Present action and opinion are, first and foremost, seen in the illumination of a fixed past, a past of infinite richness and glory; only as an afterthought, if at all, are such action and opinion construed as instrumentalities for the building of a future. The ghosts of the past, preferably of the remote past, haunt the cultured man at every step. He is uncannily responsive to their slightest touch; he shrinks from the employment of his individuality as a creative agency. But perhaps the most extraordinary thing about the cultured ideal is its selection of the particular treasures of the past which it deems worthiest of worship. This selection, which might seem bizarre to a mere outsider, is generally justified by a number of reasons, sometimes endowed with a philosophic cast, but unsympathetic persons seem to incline to the view that these reasons are only rationalizations *ad hoc*, that the selection of treasures has proceeded chiefly according to the accidents of history.

In brief, this cultured ideal is a vesture and an air. The vesture may drape gracefully about one's person and the air has often much charm, but the vesture is a ready-made garment for all that and the air remains an air. In America the cultured ideal, in its quintessential classical form, is a more exotic plant than in the halls of Oxford and Cambridge, whence it was imported to these rugged shores, but fragments and derivatives of it meet us frequently enough. The cultured ideal embraces many forms, of which the classical Oxonian form is merely one of the most typical. There are also Chinese and Talmudic

parallels. Wherever we find it, it discloses itself to our eyes in the guise of a spiritual heirloom that must, at all cost, be preserved intact.

The third use made of the term is the least easy to define and to illustrate satisfactorily, perhaps because those who use it are so seldom able to give us a perfectly clear idea of just what they themselves mean by culture. Culture in this third sense shares with our first, technical, conception an emphasis on the spiritual possessions of the group rather than of the individual. With our second conception it shares a stressing of selected factors out of the vast whole of the ethnologist's stream of culture as intrinsically more valuable, more characteristic, more significant in a spiritual sense than the rest. To say that this culture embraces all the psychic, as contrasted with the purely material, elements of civilization would not be accurate, partly because the resulting conception would still harbor a vast number of relatively trivial elements, partly because certain of the material factors might well occupy a decisive place in the cultural ensemble. To limit the term, as is sometimes done, to art, religion, and science has again the disadvantage of a too rigid exclusiveness. We may perhaps come nearest the mark by saying that the cultural conception we are now trying to grasp aims to embrace in a single term those general attitudes, views of life, and specific manifestations of civilization that give a particular people its distinctive place in the world. Emphasis is put not so much on what is done and believed by a people as on how what is done and believed functions in the whole life of that people, on what significance it has for them. . . .

## II. THE GENUINE CULTURE

The second and third conceptions of the term "culture" are what I wish to make the basis of our genuine culture—the pretender to the throne whose claims to recognition we are to consider. We may accept culture as signifying the characteristic mold of a national civilization, while from the second conception of culture, that of a traditional type of individual refinement, we will borrow the notion of ideal form. Let me say at once that nothing is farther from my mind than to plead the cause of any specific type of culture. It would be idle to praise or blame any fundamental condition of our civilization, to praise or blame any strand in the warp and woof of its genius. These conditions and these strands must be accepted as basic. They are slowly modifiable, to be sure, like everything else in the history of man, but radical modification of fundamentals does not seem necessary for the production of a genuine culture, however much a readjustment of their relations may be. In other words,



a genuine culture is perfectly conceivable in any type or stage of civilization, in the mold of any national genius. It can be conceived as easily in terms of a Mohammedan polygamous society, or of an American Indian "primitive" non-agricultural society, as in those of our familiar occidental societies. On the other hand, what may by contrast be called "spurious" cultures are just as easily conceivable in conditions of general enlightenment as in those of relative ignorance and squalor.

The genuine culture is not of necessity either high or low; it is merely inherently harmonious, balanced, self-satisfactory. It is the expression of a richly varied and yet somehow unified and consistent attitude toward life, an attitude which sees the significance of any one element of civilization in its relation to all others. It is, ideally speaking, a culture in which nothing is spiritually meaningless, in which no important part of the general functioning brings with it a sense of frustration, of misdirected or unsympathetic effort. It is not a spiritual hybrid of contradictory patches, of water-tight compartments of consciousness that avoid participation in a harmonious synthesis. If the culture necessitates slavery, it frankly admits it; if it abhors slavery, it feels its way to an economic adjustment that obviates the necessity of its employment. It does not make a great show in its ethical ideals of an uncompromising opposition to slavery, only to introduce what amounts to a slave system into certain portions of its industrial mechanism. Or, if it builds itself magnificent houses of worship, it is because of the necessity it feels to symbolize in beautiful stone a religious impulse that is deep and vital; if it is ready to discard institutionalized religion, it is prepared also to dispense with the homes of institutionalized religion. It does not look sheepish when a direct appeal is made to its religious consciousness, then make amends by furtively donating a few dollars toward the maintenance of an African mission. Nor does it carefully instruct its children in what it knows to be of no use or vitality either to them or in its own mature life. Nor does it tolerate a thousand other spiritual maladjustments such as are patent enough in our American life of today. It would be too much to say that even the purest examples yet known of a genuine culture have been free of spiritual discords, of the dry rot of social habit, devitalized. But the great cultures, those that we instinctively feel to have been healthy spiritual organisms, such as the Athenian culture of the Age of Pericles and, to a less extent perhaps, the English culture of Elizabethan days, have at least tended to such harmony.

It should be clearly understood that this ideal of a genuine culture has no necessary connection with what we call efficiency. A society may be admirably efficient in the sense that all its activities are carefully planned with reference

to ends of maximum utility to the society as a whole, it may tolerate no lost motion, yet it may well be an inferior organism as a culture-bearer. It is not enough that the ends of activities be socially satisfactory, that each member of the community feel in some dim way that he is doing his bit toward the attainment of a social benefit. This is all very well so far as it goes, but a genuine culture refuses to consider the individual as a mere cog, as an entity whose sole *raison d'être* lies in his subservience to a collective purpose that he is not conscious of or that has only a remote relevancy to his interests and strivings. The major activities of the individual must directly satisfy his own creative and emotional impulses, must always be something more than means to an end. The great cultural fallacy of industrialism, as developed up to the present time, is that in harnessing machines to our uses it has not known how to avoid the harnessing of the majority of mankind to its machines. The telephone girl who lends her capacities, during the greater part of the living day, to the manipulation of a technical routine that has an eventually high efficiency value but that answers to no spiritual needs of her own is an appalling sacrifice to civilization. As a solution of the problem of culture she is a failure—the more dismal the greater her natural endowment. As with the telephone girl, so, it is to be feared, with the great majority of us, slave-stokers to fires that burn for demons we would destroy, were it not that they appear in the guise of our benefactors. The American Indian who solves the economic problem with salmon-spear and rabbit-snare operates on a relatively low level of civilization, but he represents an incomparably higher solution than our telephone girl of the questions that culture has to ask of economics. There is here no question of the immediate utility, of the effective directness, of economic effort, nor of any sentimentalizing regrets as to the passing of the “natural man.” The Indian’s salmon-spearing is a culturally higher type of activity than that of the telephone girl or mill hand simply because there is normally no sense of spiritual frustration during its prosecution, no feeling of subservience to tyrannous yet largely inchoate demands, because it works in naturally with all the rest of the Indian’s activities instead of standing out as a desert patch of merely economic effort in the whole of life. A genuine culture cannot be defined as a sum of abstractly desirable ends, as a mechanism. It must be looked upon as a sturdy plant growth, each remotest leaf and twig of which is organically fed by the sap at the core. And this growth is not here meant as a metaphor for the group only; it is meant to apply as well to the individual. A culture that does not build itself out of the central interests and desires of its bearers, that works from general ends to the individual, is an external culture. The word “external” which is so often instinctively chosen to describe such a culture, is well

chosen. The genuine culture is internal, it works from the individuals to ends.

We have already seen that there is no necessary correlation between the development of civilization and the relative genuineness of the culture which forms its spiritual essence. This requires a word of further explanation. By the development of civilization is meant the ever increasing degree of sophistication of our society and of our individual lives. This progressive sophistication is the inevitable cumulative result of the sifting processes of social experience, of the ever increasing complications of our innumerable types of organization; most of all of our steadily growing knowledge of our natural environment and, as a consequence, our practical mastery, for economic ends, of the resources that nature at once grants us and hides from us. It is chiefly the cumulative force of this sophistication that gives us the sense of what we call "progress." Perched on the heights of an office building twenty or more stories taller than our fathers ever dreamed of, we feel that we are getting up in the world. Hurling our bodies through space with an ever accelerating velocity, we feel that we are getting on. Under sophistication I include not merely intellectual and technical advance, but most of the tendencies that make for a cleaner and healthier and, to a large extent, a more humanitarian existence. It is excellent to keep one's hands spotlessly clean, to eliminate smallpox, to administer anesthetics. Our growing sophistication, our ever increasing solicitude to obey the dictates of common sense, make these tendencies imperative. It would be sheer obscurantism to wish to stay their progress. But there can be no stranger illusion—and it is an illusion we nearly all share—than this, that because the tools of life are today more specialized and more refined than ever before, that because the technique brought by science is more perfect than anything the world has yet known, it necessarily follows that we are in like degree attaining to a profounder harmony of life, to a deeper and more satisfying culture. It is as though we believed that an elaborate mathematical computation which involved figures of seven and eight digits could not but result in a like figure. Yet we know that one million multiplied by zero gives us zero quite as effectively as one multiplied by zero. The truth is that sophistication, which is what we ordinarily mean by the progress of civilization, is, in the long run, a merely quantitative concept that defines the external conditions for the growth or decay of culture. We are right to have faith in the progress of civilization. We are wrong to assume that the maintenance or even advance of culture is a function of such progress. A reading of the facts of ethnology and culture history proves plainly that maxima of culture have frequently been reached in low levels of sophistication; that minima of culture have been

plumbed in some of the highest. Civilization, as a whole, moves on; culture comes and goes.

Every profound change in the flow of civilization, particularly every change in its economic bases, tends to bring about an unsettling and readjustment of culture values. Old culture forms, habitual types of reaction, tend to persist through the force of inertia. The maladjustment of these habitual reactions to their new civilizational environment brings with it a measure of spiritual disharmony, which the more sensitive individuals feel eventually as a fundamental lack of culture. Sometimes the maladjustment corrects itself with great rapidity, at other times it may persist for generations, as in the case of America, where a chronic state of cultural maladjustment has for so long a period reduced much of our higher life to sterile externality. It is easier, generally speaking, for a genuine culture to subsist on a lower level of civilization; the differentiation of individuals as regards their social and economic functions is so much less than in the higher levels that there is less danger of the reduction of the individual to an unintelligible fragment of the social organism. How to reap the undeniable benefits of a great differentiation of functions, without at the same time losing sight of the individual as a nucleus of live cultural values, is the great and difficult problem of any rapidly complicating civilization. We are far from having solved it in America. Indeed, it may be doubted whether more than an insignificant minority are aware of the existence of the problem. Yet the present world-wide labor unrest has as one of its deepest roots some sort of perception of the cultural fallacy of the present form of industrialism.

It is perhaps the sensitive ethnologist who has studied an aboriginal civilization at first hand who is most impressed by the frequent vitality of culture in less sophisticated levels. He cannot but admire the well-rounded life of the average participant in the civilization of a typical American Indian tribe; the firmness with which every part of that life—economic, social, religious, and aesthetic—is bound together into a significant whole in respect to which he is far from a passive pawn; above all, the molding rôle, oftentimes definitely creative, that he plays in the mechanism of his culture. When the political integrity of his tribe is destroyed by contact with the whites and the old cultural values cease to have the atmosphere needed for their continued vitality, the Indian finds himself in a state of bewildered vacuity. Even if he succeeds in making a fairly satisfactory compromise with his new environment, in making what his well-wishers consider great progress toward enlightenment, he is apt to retain an uneasy sense of the loss of some vague and great good, some state of mind that he would be hard put to it to define, but which gave



him a courage and joy that latter-day prosperity never quite seems to have regained for him. What has happened is that he has slipped out of the warm embrace of a culture into the cold air of fragmentary existence. What is sad about the passing of the Indian is not the depletion of his numbers by disease nor even the contempt that is too often meted out to him in his life on the reservation, it is the fading away of genuine cultures, built though they were out of the materials of a low order of sophistication.

We have no right to demand of the higher levels of sophistication that they preserve to the individual his manifold functioning, but we may well ask whether, as a compensation, the individual may not reasonably demand an intensification in cultural value, a spiritual heightening, of such functions as are left him. Failing this, he must be admitted to have retrograded. The limitation in functioning works chiefly in the economic sphere. It is therefore imperative, if the individual is to preserve his value as a cultured being, that he compensate himself out of the non-economic, the non-utilitarian spheres—social, religious, scientific, aesthetic. This idea of compensation brings to view an important issue, that of the immediate and the remoter ends of human effort.

As a mere organism, man's only function is to exist; in other words, to keep himself alive and to propagate his kind. Hence the procuring of food, clothing, and shelter for himself and those dependent on him constitutes the immediate end of his effort. There are civilizations, like that of the Eskimo, in which by far the greater part of man's energy is consumed in the satisfaction of these immediate ends, in which most of his activities contribute directly or indirectly to the procuring and preparation of food and the materials for clothing and shelter. There are practically no civilizations, however, in which at least some of the available energy is not set free for the remoter ends, though, as a rule, these remoter ends are by a process of rationalization made to seem to contribute to the immediate ones. (A magical ritual, for instance, which, when considered psychologically, seems to liberate and give form to powerful emotional aesthetic elements of our nature, is nearly always put in harness to some humdrum utilitarian end—the catching of rabbits or the curing of disease.) As a matter of fact, there are very few "primitive" civilizations that do not consume an exceedingly large share of their energies in the pursuit of the remoter ends, though it remains true that these remoter ends are nearly always functionally or pseudo-functionally interwoven with the immediate ends. Art for art's sake may be a psychological fact on these less sophisticated levels; it is certainly not a cultural fact.

On our own level of civilization the remoter ends tend to split off altogether

from the immediate ones and to assume the form of a spiritual escape or refuge from the pursuit of the latter. The separation of the two classes of ends is never absolute nor can it ever be; it is enough to note the presence of a powerful drift of the two away from each other. It is easy to demonstrate this drift by examples taken out of our daily experience. While in most primitive civilizations the dance is apt to be a ritual activity at least ostensibly associated with purposes of an economic nature, it is with us a merely and self-consciously pleasurable activity that not only splits off from the sphere of the pursuit of immediate ends but even tends to assume a position of hostility to that sphere. In a primitive civilization a great chief dances as a matter of course, oftentimes as a matter of exercising a peculiarly honored privilege. With us the captain of industry either refuses to dance at all or does so as a half-contemptuous concession to the tyranny of social custom. On the other hand, the artist of a Ballet Russe has sublimated the dance to an exquisite instrument of self-expression, has succeeded in providing himself with an adequate, or more than adequate, cultural recompense for his loss of mastery in the realm of direct ends. The captain of industry is one of the comparatively small class of individuals that has inherited, in vastly complicated form, something of the feeling of control over the attainment of direct ends that belongs by cultural right to primitive man; the ballet dancer has saved and intensified for himself the feeling of spontaneous participation and creativeness in the world of indirect ends that also belongs by cultural right to primitive man. Each has saved part of the wreckage of a submerged culture for himself.

The psychology of direct and indirect ends undergoes a gradual modification, only partly consummated as yet, in the higher levels of civilization. The immediate ends continue to exercise the same tyrannical sway in the ordering of our lives, but as our spiritual selves become enriched and develop a more and more inordinate craving for subtler forms of experience, there develops also an attitude of impatience with the solution of the more immediate problems of life. In other words, the immediate ends cease to be felt as chief ends and gradually become necessary means, but only means, toward the attainment of the more remote ends. These remoter ends, in turn, so far from being looked upon as purely incidental activities which result from the spilling over of an energy concentrated almost entirely on the pursuit of the immediate ends, become the chief ends of life. This change of attitude is implied in the statement that the art, science, and religion of a higher civilization best express its spirit or culture. The transformation of ends thus briefly outlined is far from an accomplished fact; it is rather an obscure drift in the history of values, an expression of the volition of the more sensitive participants in our culture.

Certain temperaments feel themselves impelled far along the drift, others lag behind.

The transformation of ends is of the greatest cultural importance because it acts as a powerful force for the preservation of culture in levels in which a fragmentary economic functioning of the individual is inevitable. So long as the individual retains a sense of control over the major goods of life, he is able to take his place in the cultural patrimony of his people. Now that the major goods of life have shifted so largely from the realm of immediate to that of remote ends, it becomes a cultural necessity for all who would not be looked upon as disinherited to share in the pursuit of these remoter ends. No harmony and depth of life, no culture, is possible when activity is well-nigh circumscribed by the sphere of immediate ends and when functioning within that sphere is so fragmentary as to have no inherent intelligibility or interest. Here lies the grimest joke of our present American civilization. The vast majority of us, deprived of any but an insignificant and culturally abortive share in the satisfaction of the immediate wants of mankind, are further deprived of both opportunity and stimulation to share in the production of non-utilitarian values. Part of the time we are dray horses; the rest of the time we are listless consumers of goods which have received no least impress of our personality. In other words, our spiritual selves go hungry, for the most part, pretty much all of the time.

### III. THE CULTURED INDIVIDUAL AND THE CULTURAL GROUP

There is no real opposition, at last analysis, between the concept of a culture of the group and the concept of an individual culture. The two are interdependent. A healthy national culture is never a passively accepted heritage from the past, but implies the creative participation of the members of the community; implies, in other words, the presence of cultured individuals. An automatic perpetuation of standardized values, not subject to the constant remodeling of individuals willing to put some part of themselves into the forms they receive from their predecessors, leads to the dominance of impersonal formulas. The individual is left out in the cold; the culture becomes a manner rather than a way of life, it ceases to be genuine. It is just as true, however, that the individual is helpless without a cultural heritage to work on. He cannot, out of his unaided spiritual powers, weave a strong cultural fabric instinct with the flush of his own personality. Creation is a bending of form to one's will, not a manufacture of form *ex nihilo*. If the passive perpetuator of a cultural tradition gives us merely a manner, the shell of a life that once was, the creator from out

of a cultural waste gives us hardly more than a gesture or a yawp, the strident promise of a vision raised by our desires.

There is a curious notion afloat that "new" countries are especially favorable soil for the formation of a virile culture. By new is meant something old that has been transplanted to a background devoid of historical associations. It would be remarkable if a plant, flourishing in heavy black loam, suddenly acquired a new virility on transplantation into a shallow sandy soil. Metaphors are dangerous things that prove nothing, but experience suggests the soundness of this particular metaphor. Indeed, there is nothing more tenuous, more shamelessly imitative and external, less virile and self-joyous, than the cultures of so-called "new countries." The environments of these transplanted cultures are new, the cultures themselves are old with the sickly age of arrested development. If signs of a genuine blossoming of culture are belatedly beginning to appear in America, it is not because America is still new; rather is America coming of age, beginning to feel a little old. In a genuinely new country, the preoccupation with the immediate ends of existence reduces creativeness in the sphere of the more remote ends to a minimum. The net result is a perceptible dwarfing of culture. The old stock of non-material cultural goods lingers on without being subjected to vital remodelings, becomes progressively impoverished, and ends by being so hopelessly ill-adjusted to the economic and social environment that the more sensitive spirits tend to break with it altogether and to begin anew with a frank recognition of the new environmental conditions. Such new starts are invariably crude; they are long in bearing the fruits of a genuine culture.

It is only an apparent paradox that the subtlest and the most decisive cultural influences of personality, the most fruitful revolts, are discernible in those environments that have long and uninterruptedly supported a richly streaming culture. So far from being suffocated in an atmosphere of endless precedent, the creative spirit gains sustenance and vigor for its own unfolding and, if it is strong enough, it may swing free of that very atmosphere with a poise hardly dreamed of by the timid iconoclasts of unformed cultures. Not otherwise could we understand the cultural history of modern Europe. Only in a mature and richly differentiated soil could arise the iconoclasm and visions of an Anatole France, a Nietzsche, an Ibsen, a Tolstoi. In America, at least in the America of yesterday, these iconoclasm and these visions would either have been strangled in the cradle, or, had they found air to breathe, they would have half-developed into a crude and pathetic isolation. There is no sound and vigorous individual incorporation of a cultured ideal without the soil of a



genuine communal culture; and no genuine communal culture without the transforming energies of personalities at once robust and saturated with the cultural values of their time and place. The highest type of culture is thus locked in the embrace of an endless chain, to the forging of which goes much labor, weary and protracted. Such a culture avoids the two extremes of "externality"—the externality of surfeit, which weighs down the individual, and the externality of barrenness. The former is the decay of Alexandrianism, in which the individual is no more; the latter, the combined immaturity and decay of an uprooted culture, in which the individual is not yet. Both types of externality may be combined in the same culture, frequently in the same person. Thus, it is not uncommon to find in America individuals who have had engrafted on a barren and purely utilitarian culture a cultural tradition that apes a grace already embalmed. One surmises that this juxtaposition of incongruous atmospheres is even typical in certain circles.

Let us look a little more closely at the place of the individual in a modern sophisticated culture. I have insisted throughout that a genuine culture is one that gives its bearers a sense of inner satisfaction, a feeling of spiritual mastery. In the higher levels of civilization this sense of mastery is all but withdrawn, as we have seen, from the economic sphere. It must, then, to an even greater extent than in more primitive civilizations, feed on the non-economic spheres of human activity. The individual is thus driven, or should be if he would be truly cultured, to the identification of himself with some portion of the wide range of non-economic interests. From the standpoint adopted in this study, this does not mean that the identification is a purely casual and acquisitive process; it is, indeed, made not so much for its own sake as in order to give the self the wherewithal to develop its powers. Concretely considered, this would mean, for instance, that a mediocre person moderately gifted with the ability to express his aesthetic instincts in plastic form and exercising that gift in his own sincere and humble way (to the neglect, it may be, of practically all other interests) is *ipso facto* a more cultured individual than a person of brilliant endowments who has acquainted himself in a general way with all the "best" that has been thought and felt and done, but who has never succeeded in bringing any portion of his range of interests into direct relation with his volitional self, with the innermost shrine of his personality. An individual of the latter type, for all his brilliance, we call "flat." A flat person cannot be truly cultured. He may, of course, be highly cultured in the conventional sense of the word "culture," but that is another story. I would not be understood as claiming that direct creativeness is essential, though it is highly desirable, for the de-

velopment of individual culture. To a large extent it is possible to gain a sense of the required mastery by linking one's own personality with that of the great minds and hearts that society has recognized as its significant creators. Possible, that is, so long as such linking, such vicarious experience, is attended by some portion of the effort, the fluttering toward realization that is inseparable from all creative effort. It is to be feared, however, that the self-discipline that is here implied is none too often practiced. The linking, as I have called it, of self with master soul too often degenerates into a pleasurable servitude, into a facile abnegation of one's own individuality, the more insidious that it has the approval of current judgment. The pleasurable servitude may degenerate still further into a vice. Those of us who are not altogether blind can see in certain of our acquaintances, if not in ourselves, an indulgence in aesthetic or scientific goods that is strictly comparable to the abuse of alcoholic intoxicants. Both types of self-ignoring or self-submerging habit are signs of a debilitated personality; both are antithetical to the formation of culture.

The individual self, then, in aspiring to culture, fastens upon the accumulated cultural goods of its society, not so much for the sake of the passive pleasure of their acquirement, as for the sake of the stimulus given to the unfolding personality and of the orientation derived in the world (or better, a world) of cultural values. The orientation, conventional as it may be, is necessary if only to give the self a *modus vivendi* with society at large. The individual needs to assimilate much of the cultural background of his society, many of the current sentiments of his people, to prevent his self-expression from degenerating into social sterility. A spiritual hermit may be genuinely cultured, but he is hardly socially so. To say that individual culture must needs grow organically out of the rich soil of a communal culture is far from saying that it must be forever tied to that culture by the leading strings of its own childhood. Once the individual self has grown strong enough to travel in the path most clearly illuminated by its own light, it not only can but should discard much of the scaffolding by which it has made its ascent. Nothing is more pathetic than the persistence with which well-meaning applicants to culture attempt to keep up or revive cultural stimuli which have long outlived their significance for the growth of personality. To keep up or brush up one's Greek, for example, in those numerous cases in which a knowledge of Greek has ceased to bear a genuine relation to the needs of the spirit, is almost a spiritual crime. It is acting "the dog in the manger" with one's own soul. If the traveling in the path of the self's illumination leads to a position that is destructive of the very values the self was fed on, as happened, though in very different ways,

with Nietzsche and with Tolstoi, it has not in the slightest lost touch with genuine culture. It may well, on the contrary, have arrived at its own highest possible point of cultural development.

Nietzsche and Tolstoi, however, are extreme types of personality. There is no danger that the vast army of cultured humanity will ever come to occupy spiritual positions of such rigor and originality. The real danger, as is so abundantly attested by daily experience, is in submitting to the remorselessly leveling forces of a common cultural heritage and of the action of average mind on average mind. These forces will always tend to a general standardization of both the content and the spirit of culture, so powerfully, indeed, that the centrifugal effect of robust, self-sustaining personalities need not be feared. The caution to conformity with tradition, which the champions of culture so often feel themselves called upon to announce, is one that we can generally dispense with. It is rather the opposite caution, the caution to conformity with the essential nature of one's own personality, that needs urging. It needs to be urged as a possible counter-irritant to the flat and tedious sameness of spiritual outlook, the anemic make-believe, the smug intolerance of the challenging, that so imprison our American souls.

No greater test of the genuineness of both individual and communal culture can be applied than the attitude adopted toward the past, its institutions, its treasures of art and thought. The genuinely cultured individual or society does not contemptuously reject the past. They honor the works of the past, but not because they are gems of historical chance, not because, being out of our reach, they must needs be looked at through the enshrining glass of museum cases. These works of the past still excite our heartfelt interest and sympathy because, and only in so far as, they may be recognized as the expression of a human spirit warmly akin, despite all differences of outward garb, to our own. This is very nearly equivalent to saying that the past is of cultural interest only when it is still the present or may yet become the future. Paradoxical as it may seem, the historical spirit has always been something of an anticultural force, has always acted in some measure as an unwitting deterrent of the cultural utilization of the past. The historical spirit says, "Beware, those thoughts and those feelings that you so rashly think to embody in the warp and woof of your own spirit—they are of other time and of other place and they issue from alien motives. In bending over them you do but obscure them with the shadow of your own spirit." This cool reserve is an excellent mood for the making of historical science; its usefulness to the building of culture in the present is doubtful. We know immensely more about Hellenic antiquity in these days than did the scholars and artists of the Renaissance; it would be folly to pre-

tend that our live utilization of the Hellenic spirit, accurately as we merely know it, is comparable to the inspiration, the creative stimulus, that those men of the Renaissance obtained from its fragmentary and garbled tradition. It is difficult to think of a renaissance of that type as thriving in the critical atmosphere of today. We should walk so gingerly in the paths of the past for fear of stepping on anachronisms, that, wearied with fatigue, we should finally sink into a heavy doze, to be awakened only by the insistent clatter of the present. It may be that in our present state of sophistication such a spirit of criticism, of detachment, is not only unavoidable but essential for the preservation of our own individualities. The past is now more of a past than ever before. Perhaps we should expect less of it than ever before. Or rather expect no more of it than it holds its portals wide open, that we may enter in and despoil it of what bits we choose for our pretty mosaics. Can it be that the critical sense of history, which galvanizes the past into scientific life, is destined to slay it for the life of culture? More probably, what is happening is that the spiritual currents of today are running so fast, so turbulently, that we find it difficult to get a culturally vital perspective of the past, which is thus, for the time being, left as a glorified mummy in the hands of the pundits. And, for the time being, those others of us who take their culture neither as knowledge nor as manner, but as life, will ask of the past not so much "what?" and "when?" and "where?" as "how?" and the accent of their "how" will be modulated in accordance with the needs of the spirit of each, a spirit that is free to glorify, to transform, and to reject.

To summarize the place of the individual in our theory of culture, we may say that the pursuit of genuine culture implies two types of reconciliation. The self seeks instinctively for mastery. In the process of acquiring a sense of mastery that is not crude but proportioned to the degree of sophistication proper to our time, the self is compelled to suffer an abridgment and to undergo a molding. The extreme differentiation of function which the progress of man has forced upon the individual menaces the spirit; we have no recourse but to submit with good grace to this abridgment of our activity, but it must not be allowed to clip the wings of the spirit unduly. This is the first and most important reconciliation—the finding of a full world of spiritual satisfactions within the straight limits of an unwontedly confined economic activity. The self must set itself at a point where it can, if not embrace the whole spiritual life of its group, at least catch enough of its rays to burst into light and flame. Moreover, the self must learn to reconcile its own strivings, its own imperious necessities, with the general spiritual life of the community. It must be content to borrow sustenance from the spiritual consciousness of that community and



of its past, not merely that it may obtain the wherewithal to grow at all, but that it may grow where its power, great or little, will be brought to bear on a spiritual life that is of intimate concern to other wills. Yet, despite all reconciliations, the self has a right to feel that it grows as an integral, self-poised, spiritual growth, whose ultimate justifications rest in itself, whose sacrifices and compensations must be justified to itself. The conception of the self as a mere instrument toward the attainment of communal ends, whether of state or other social body, is to be discarded as leading in the long run to psychological absurdities and to spiritual slavery. It is the self that concedes, if there is to be any concession. Spiritual freedom, what there is of it, is not alms dispensed, now indifferently, now grudgingly, by the social body. That a different philosophy of the relation of the individual to his group is now so prevalent, makes it all the more necessary to insist on the spiritual primacy of the individual soul.

It is a noteworthy fact that wherever there is discussion of culture, emphasis is instinctively placed upon art. This applies as well to individual as to communal culture. We apply the term "cultured" only with reserve to an individual in whose life the aesthetic moment plays no part. So also, if we would catch something of the spirit, the genius, of a bygone period or of an exotic civilization, we turn first and foremost to its art. A thoughtless analysis would see in this nothing but the emphasis on the beautiful, the decorative, that comports with the conventional conception of culture as a life of traditionally molded refinement. A more penetrating analysis discards such an interpretation. For it the highest manifestations of culture, the very quintessence of the genius of a civilization, necessarily rest in art, for the reason that art is the authentic expression, in satisfying form, of experience; experience not as logically ordered by science, but as directly and intuitively presented to us in life. As culture rests, in essence, on the harmonious development of the sense of mastery instinctively sought by each individual soul, this can only mean that art, the form of consciousness in which the impress of the self is most direct, least hampered by outward necessity, is above all other undertakings of the human spirit bound to reflect culture. To relate *our* lives, *our* intuitions, *our* passing moods to forms of expression that carry conviction to others and make us live again in these others is the highest spiritual satisfaction we know of, the highest welding of one's individuality with the spirit of his civilization. Were art ever really perfect in expression, it would indeed be immortal. Even the greatest art, however, is full of the dross of conventionality, of the particular sophistications of its age. As these change, the directness of expression in any work of art tends to be increasingly felt as hampered by a something fixed

and alien, until it gradually falls into oblivion. While art lives, it belongs to culture; in the degree that it takes on the frigidity of death, it becomes of interest only to the study of civilization. Thus all art appreciation (and production, for that matter) has two faces. It is unfortunate that the face directed to civilization is so often confounded with that which is fixed on culture.

#### IV. THE GEOGRAPHY OF CULTURE

An oft-noted peculiarity of the development of culture is the fact that it reaches its greatest heights in comparatively small, autonomous groups. In fact, it is doubtful if a genuine culture ever properly belongs to more than such a restricted group, a group between the members of which there can be said to be something like direct intensive spiritual contact. This direct contact is enriched by the common cultural heritage on which the minds of all are fed; it is rendered swift and pregnant by the thousands of feelings and ideas that are tacitly assumed and that constantly glimmer in the background. Such small, culturally autonomous groups were the Athens of the Periclean Age, the Rome of Augustus, the independent city-states of Italy in late medieval times, the London of Elizabethan days, and the Paris of the last three centuries. It is customary to speak of certain of these groups and of their cultures as though they were identical with, or represented, widely extended groups and cultures. To a curiously large extent such usages are really figures of speech, substitutions of a part for the whole. It is astonishing, for instance, how much the so-called "history of French literature" is really the history of literary activity in the city of Paris. True enough, a narrowly localized culture may, and often does, spread its influence far beyond its properly restricted sphere. Sometimes it sets the pace for a whole nationality, for a far-flung empire. It can do so, however, only at the expense of diluting in spirit as it moves away from its home, of degenerating into an imitative attitudinizing. If we realized more keenly what the rapid spread or imposition of a culture entails, to what extent it conquers by crushing the germs of healthier autonomous growths, we would be less eager to welcome uniformizing tendencies, less ready to think of them as progressive in character. A culture may well be quickened from without, but its supersession by another, whether superior or not, is no cultural gain. Whether or not it is attended by a political gain does not concern us here. That is why the deliberate attempt to impose a culture directly and speedily, no matter how backed by good will, is an affront to the human spirit. When such an attempt is backed, not by good will, but by military ruthlessness, it is the greatest conceivable crime against the human spirit, it is the very denial of culture.

Does this mean that we must turn our back on all internationalistic tendencies and vegetate forever in our nationalisms? Here we are confronted by the prevalent fallacy that internationalism is in spirit opposed to the intensive development of autonomous cultures. The fallacy proceeds from a failure to realize that internationalism, nationalism, and localism are forms that can be given various contents. We cannot intelligently discuss internationalism before we know what it is that we are to be internationalistic about. Unfortunately we are so obsessed by the idea of subordinating all forms of human association to the state and of regarding the range of all types of activity as conterminous with political boundaries, that it is difficult for us to reconcile the idea of a local or restrictedly national autonomy of culture with a purely political state-sovereignty and with an economic-political internationalism.

No one can see clearly what is destined to be the larger outcome of the present world conflicts. They may exacerbate rather than allay national-political animosities and thus tend to strengthen the prestige of the state. But this deplorable result cannot well be other than a passing phase. Even now it is evident that the war has, in more ways than one, paved the way for an economic and, as a corollary, a semi-political internationalism. All those spheres of activity that relate to the satisfaction of immediate ends, which, from the vantage point that we have gained, are nothing but means, will tend to become international functions. However the internationalizing processes will shape themselves in detail, they will at bottom be but the reflection of that growing impatience of the human spirit with the preoccupation with direct ends, which I spoke of before. Such transnational problems as the distribution of economic goods, the transportation of commodities, the control of highways, the coinage, and numerous others, must eventually pass into the hands of international organizations for the simple reason that men will not eternally give their loyalty to the uselessly national administration of functions that are of inherently international scope. As this international scope gets to be thoroughly realized, our present infatuations with national prestige in the economic sphere will show themselves for the spiritual imbecilities that they are.

All this has much to do with the eventual development of culture. As long as culture is looked upon as a decorative appanage of large political units, one can plausibly argue that its preservation is bound up with the maintenance of the prestige of these units. But genuine culture is inconceivable except on the basis of a highly individual spiritual consciousness, it rarely remains healthy and subtle when spread thin over an interminable area, and in its higher reaches it is in no mood to submit to economic and political bonds. Now a generalized internationalized culture is hardly thinkable. The national-polit-

ical unit tends to arrogate culture to itself and up to a certain point it succeeds in doing so, but only at the price of serious cultural impoverishment of vast portions of its terrain. If the economic and political integrity of these large state-controlled units becomes gradually undermined by the growth of international functions, their cultural *raison d'être* must also tend to weaken. Culture must then tend with ever increasing intensity to cling to relatively small social and to minor political units, units that are not too large to incorporate the individuality that is to culture as the very breath of life. Between these two processes, the integration of economic and political forces into a world sovereignty and the disintegration of our present unwieldy culture units into small units whose life is truly virile and individual, the fetich of the present state, with its uncontrolled sovereignty, may in the dim future be trusted to melt away. The political state of today has long been on trial and has been found wanting. Our national-political units are too small for peace, too large for safety. They are too small for the intelligent solution of the large problems in the sphere of direct ends; they are too large for the fruitful enrichment of the remoter ends, for culture.

It is in the New World, perhaps more than in any other part of the globe, that the unsatisfactory nature of a geographically widespread culture, of little depth or individuality to begin with, is manifest. To find substantially the same cultural manifestations, material and spiritual, often indeed to the minutest details, in New York and Chicago and San Francisco is saddening. It argues a shallowness in the culture itself and a readiness to imitation in its bearers that is not reassuring. Even if no definite way out of the flat cultural morass is clearly discernible for the present, there is no good in basking forever in self-sufficiency. It can only be of benefit to search out the depths of our hearts and to find wherein they are wanting. If we exaggerate our weakness, it does not matter; better chastening than self-glorification. We have been in the habit of giving ourselves credit for essentially quantitative results that are due rather to an unusually favoring nature and to a favoring set of economic conditions than to anything in ourselves. Our victories have been brilliant, but they have also too often been barren for culture. The habit of playing with loaded dice has given us a dangerous attitude of passivity—dangerous, that is, for culture. Stretching back opulently in our easy chairs, we expect great cultural things to happen to us. We have wound up the machinery, and admirable machinery it is; it is “up to” culture to come forth, in heavy panoply. The minute increment of individuality which alone makes culture in the self and eventually builds up a culture in the community seems somehow overlooked. Canned culture is so much easier to administer.



Just now we are expecting a great deal from the European war. No doubt the war and its aftermath will shake us out of some part of our smugness and let in a few invigorating air currents of cultural influence, but, if we are not careful, these influences may soon harden into new standardizations or become diluted into another stock of imitative attitudes and reactions. The war and its aftermath cannot be a sufficient cultural cause, they are at best but another set of favoring conditions. We need not be too much astonished if a Periclean culture does not somehow automatically burst into bloom. Sooner or later we shall have to get down to the humble task of exploring the depths of our consciousness and dragging to the light what sincere bits of reflected experience we can find. These bits will not always be beautiful, they will not always be pleasing, but they will be genuine. And then we can build. In time, in plenty of time—for we must have patience—a genuine culture—better yet, a series of linked autonomous cultures—will grace our lives. And New York and Chicago and San Francisco will live each in its own cultural strength, not squinting from one to another to see which gets ahead in a race for external values, but each serenely oblivious of its rivals because growing in a soil of genuine cultural values.

# THE ANATOMY OF SOCIETY: COMMUNITY AND POLITY

## 2. BASES FOR POLITY: CUSTOM, LAW, AND AUTHORITY



## ROBERT M. MACIVER

ROBERT MORRISON MAC IVER (b. 1882 in Scotland), one of the foremost theoreticians of modern democracy, formulated his political principles at a time when the individualistic assumptions of classical liberal theory were being challenged by socialistic and nationalistic theories, all of which emphasized the priority of the group over the individual. MacIver attempted to synthesize these conflicting viewpoints by adopting the premises (1) that man's nature is "woven of individuality *and* sociality," and (2) that a rigid distinction must be drawn between *community*, the spontaneous structures deriving from man's social nature, and *association*, the social instruments designed to serve individual purposes. Individuality and sociality are thus complementary rather than contradictory. For MacIver, individuality is expressed through a wide diversity of social relationships, and has always been the goal toward which society is advancing. As to the state, MacIver has condemned both absolutist and pluralist theories of state sovereignty as untrue to the facts. The limitations of state action are to be specified, not in terms of fixed formula, but solely in the light of individual and communal values. Because of the existing diversity of these values, the state is barred from becoming the exclusive instrument of any one of them. In effect, the authority of the state does not rest on force or manipulation, but on "consensus," by which MacIver means the community's acceptance of the need for some instrument to integrate its various activities and so to insure its survival as a community. Hence MacIver has opposed theories which, like Marx's, stress the divisive rather than the unifying elements in society. While fully sympathetic with the aspirations of underprivileged classes, MacIver welcomes their integration into the community by means of the democratic state, but repudiates their claim to domination.

Long associated with Columbia University, MacIver is Lieber Professor Emeritus of Political Philosophy and Sociology. His more important works include *Community: A Sociological Study* (1914); *The Modern State* (1926), from which the following selection has been taken; *Society, Its Structure and Change* (1931); *Leviathan and the People* (1939); *Social Causation* (1942); *Toward an Abiding Peace* (1943); *The Web of Government* (1947); and *The Ramparts We Guard* (1950).





## THE MODERN STATE

*Introductory*

## I. THE STATE AS AN ASSOCIATION

. . . It may seem curious that so great and obvious a fact as the state should be the object of quite conflicting definitions, yet such is certainly the case. Some writers define the state as essentially a class-structure, "an organization of one class dominating over the other classes"; others regard it as the one organization that transcends class and stands for the whole community. Some interpret it as a power-system, others as a welfare-system, this being the line of cleavage between the two great series of political thinkers who in the modern world trace their descent back respectively to Machiavelli and to Grotius or Althusius. Some view it entirely as a legal construction, either in the old Austinian sense which made it a relationship of governors and governed, or, in the language of modern jurisprudence, as a community "organized for action under legal rules." Some identify it with the nation, others regard nationality as incidental or unnecessary or even as a falsifying element which perverts the nature and function of the state. Some regard it as no more than a mutual insurance society, others as the very texture of all our life. To some it is a necessary evil, and to a very few an evil that is or will some day be unnecessary, while to others it is "the world the spirit has made for itself." Some class the state as one in the order of "corporations," and others think of it as indistinguishable from society itself. . . .

In the first place we must distinguish the state from society. To identify the social with the political is to be guilty of the grossest of all confusions, which completely bars any understanding of either society or the state. It is perfectly obvious, if only we look at the facts of the case, that there are social forms, like the family or the church or the club, which owe neither their origin nor their inspiration to the state; and social forces, like custom or competition, which the state may protect or modify, but certainly does not create; and social motives like friendship or jealousy, which establish relationships too intimate and personal to be controlled by the great engine of the state. The state exists within society, but it is not even the *form* of society. We see it best in what it does. Its achievement is a system of order and control. The state in a word

---

This selection has been reprinted from Robert M. MacIver, *The Modern State* (pp. 3-10, 17, 19-22, 25-26, 28-50, Oxford University Press, London, 1926) by permission of The Clarendon Press, Oxford.

regulates the outstanding external relationships of men in society. It supports or exploits, curbs or liberates, fulfils or even destroys, the social life over which it is invested with control—but the instrument is not the life. In the earliest phases, among hunters, fishers, rootdiggers, and fruit-gathers there have been social groups which knew nothing or almost nothing of the state. Today there remain simple peoples, such as certain groups of Eskimos, which have no recognizable political organization. And at the other extreme, in the highest civilizations which have been attained, the long struggle against the insatiate claims of power has revealed the great intrinsic aspects of individual and social life, the things that are not Caesar's, and withdrawn them wholly, or in great part, from the competence of the state.

This distinction once established, it remains that the state must either be an institutional system or an association. There is no third alternative. All social forms may be classed as areas of society (as we shall call them, communities); organizations established within society for the achievement of conscious and therefore limited purposes (as we shall call them, associations); and institutions, the recognized modes in accordance with which communities and associations regulate their activities. . . . An association denotes a group of persons or members who are associated and organized into a unity of will for a common end, whereas the term institution does not refer directly to persons at all but to the form of order along which their activities are related and directed. It is the obvious distinction between, say, the family and marriage, the church and communion, the professional association and the code. Institutions may, however, be established by the community as well as by associations, and we may include customs in the former class. There is sometimes an ambiguity because the same term may apply either to the form or the group, the institution or the association. We speak of the party, the family, the church, the department, the hospital and so forth, meaning the system of organization rather than the organized membership. And we often use the term "institution" loosely, in the sense which properly belongs to "association." But the distinction is a clear and necessary one. It is brought out in the following simple conspectus of social forms.

#### SOCIAL FORMS

Integral unities	COMMUNITIES:	Exx. country, city, village, nation, tribe. †
Partial unities	ASSOCIATIONS:	Exx. family, church, party, class, business firm.
Modes or means	INSTITUTIONS:	Exx. inheritance, baptism, the party "machine," class distinctions, the market.

Only a part of one's life is lived within or as a member of an association, but there is a sense in which the whole of one's life falls within a circle, greater or smaller, of community. There was a time when the family seemed to comprehend the whole life, but if so, it was not the family as we know it, but rather a family community which on the ostensible basis of kinship included a whole group of social interests. There were likewise times when the state *claimed* control over every sphere of life, but such claims have never been realized, for under the most absolute state, use and wont, custom and tradition, social authority underived from the state but instead the very ground of political power, were far more effective forces in the organization of communal life. Not only must we deny that the state is a community or a form of community, we must definitely declare it to be an association belonging to the same category as the family or the church. Like these it consists essentially of a group of members organized in a definite way and *therefore* for limited ends. The organization of the state is not all social organization; the ends for which the state stands are not all the ends which humanity seeks; and quite obviously, the ways in which the state pursues its objects are only some of the ways in which within society men strive for the objects of their desire.

The state as will presently appear is distinguished from other associations by certain peculiar characters of its own—but a like statement is true of the family or the church. One historical peculiarity must here be mentioned, because it helps to explain why the true associational character of the state has even yet scarcely been realized in our political thinking. By its very nature the state must include under its control all persons who live within its territorial bounds, whether they are properly members of the state or not. It seems accordingly, to the superficial glance, not to depend on membership, not on an organization deliberately established or maintained by the common will of men. In respect of origins we might even say that there were state-institutions before there was a state at all. As the state emerged the logic of power extended the institution beyond the association. So we may say that in the extreme case of a country subjected to foreign conquest there are state-institutions but no state. In the modern world the range of state-institutions has grown more nearly coincident with that of the state-association. To complete that transformation is the ideal of democracy, which would thus abolish the distinction between the dominant will that imposes institutions and the common will that creates them. . . .

## II. THE STATE IN TERMS OF SOVEREIGNTY

It remains for us to distinguish the state from other associations and so to complete our definition. To this end we must consider the special character of those institutions which are properly called political. Has the state any institutions peculiar to itself? These, if they exist, must give us the clue we are seeking. Let us therefore examine the two great engines of political control, sovereignty as exercised by state governments and law as the chief engine by which it is exercised. The nature of sovereignty has been the subject of much needless mystery. It is surrounded by a halo that dates back to the tribal reverence which alone, in primitive ages, could sanction the obedience it must command. It is said that men died of shock on hearing of the execution of Charles I and of Louis XVI, just as savage men have perished when they unwittingly broke the taboo surrounding the chief and his belongings. This magic sovereignty became transformed into legal prerogative, divine origin passing into divine right. When that proud title fell in turn from the relaxing grasp of monarchism, it was transferred from the person to the incarnate state. The mystic name that had exalted the obvious reality of the king now crowned a being as mystic as itself, the omnipotent majesty of the state. The fierce light that in times of stress and social revolution beats upon a throne had destroyed the ancient halo—for halos are visible only when the "visibility" is low—but the new sovereign dwelt apart in a shadowy realm of abstractions, powerful over the mind of man in so far as they elude his understanding.

If we think of the state as an association, unique in its kind and of incalculable significance but still an association like the rest, we are saved from these delusions. We shall also avoid those needless inquiries into the residence of sovereignty which demand whether it belongs of right or in fact to people or electorate or parliament or king. Every association of any magnitude has grades of authority and control analogous to those of the state. Consider, for example, the case of a business corporation. It has a body of shareholders who are united in the will and interest to uphold the corporation. That is, shall we say, the "general will" of the association, and it corresponds in its own kind with the general will of the state. But a will of this kind can only uphold, can only accept and maintain the broad common purpose of an association. It cannot direct, it cannot determine policy. All who agree upon the end are not therefore agreed upon the means. The shareholders must choose a board of directors, but neither on the choice nor on the policy of the board are they likely to be unanimous. A dominant group, at most a majority, will decide. Here we have the policy determining will, which in the sphere of the devel-



oped state is called the "sovereign people" or the "sovereign electorate." It is quite distinct from the "general will," since in spite of the integrity our terms imply, it is at most a majority-will. It arises out of partial conflict beneath which, and reconciling which is the broader purpose of the general will. Again, in the case of our corporation, we have the necessity for a board or "executive" which shall initiate, develop, and execute policy within the limits assigned or permitted by the majority or dominant membership. In the type of case we have cited, the board of directors has usually a very free hand, and the shareholders exercise their power mainly in the matter of appointment; in other cases the members more directly control policy. In the sphere of the state the board of directors is the government, and here again we apply the term sovereignty, speaking of the "sovereign parliament" and, under monarchical institutions, of the "sovereign king." But in all cases this sovereign derives its power and its might from the broader will which elects or accepts it, and that in turn rests on the "general will" which is the spirit of citizenship. . . .

### III. THE STATE IN TERMS OF LAW

Every association creates laws after its kind, but the laws of the state are sharply distinguished from all others. Political sovereignty, we have sought to show, is not, in respect of its form and mode of operation, vitally different from other types of government, such as the control of a business. Government is the exercise of will within a particular sphere, itself supported by a broader will, and this is as true of a business corporation or a church as of a state. But political law is unique, and in its uniqueness alone rests the distinctiveness of political sovereignty. Every association makes laws, but the laws of other associations, in the developed state, bind the members of them only in so far as they prefer to accept them rather than lose the benefits of membership. If I choose to disrespect the laws of my club I lose its privileges—that and nothing more. The club may fine me for nonconformity to its rules, but if I prefer to give up its advantages I need never pay the fine. If I disapprove of the laws of any economic or scientific or cultural or religious association to which I belong, I may resign at will. There is no positive penalty properly attaching to their laws. I am neither compelled to join the association nor prevented from leaving it. If I am punished, say for violating the obligations of the family, it is not because the family, but because the state insists. The law of the state alone, in a demarcated or advanced society, is coercive. That law alone binds me of necessity. If I leave one state—and even to do so is sometimes forbidden—it is at the price of leaving its territory—and then I automatically pass within the range of the law of another state. The law of the

state is ineluctable. It binds the rulers as well as the subjects. It is universal, in that nowhere does it cease to function. Political law is thus an unbroken framework over each area of society. . . .

Because then of this generality, the law cannot be more than the framework of order. To some court is given the power of interpretation and above all the power of applying the sanction of law, of adjusting penalties or assessing damages, within the limits which the law itself permits. But these adjustments . . . are possible only within relatively narrow limits. Even with their aid, the law remains a vast structural frame which cannot do more than limit the myriad relationships of men. It cannot control the operation of the spontaneous constructive activities of life. Its essential instrument, the law, is too general, too clumsy, too formal, to touch the essentials of conduct. Men feel the need for other collectivities with other methods. The state serves best when it provides the liberty and order on which other associations can build and by which they seek more intimate or more particular ends. The state cannot possibly fulfil the purpose of the family or the church or the trade union or the cultural organizations. Its attempts to usurp the place of any of these have been historically futile. When the French revolutionary government declared that "the abolition of every kind of corporation formed among citizens of the same state is a fundamental basis of the French Constitution," it proclaimed a doctrinaire absolutism which no state could possibly enforce.

The universal and therefore formal character of its law limits the sphere of the state in another respect. It can only concern itself, if true to the nature of law, with those interests which can reasonably be regarded as universal. It is, for example, an incongruity on the part of the state to endow one of several religions professed by its citizens, still more to identify itself with such a religion. There are many interests which are shared by only a part of the citizen body. All cultural interests are exceedingly diversified, and the advance of culture seems to involve an ever greater differentiation of human purposes and ideals. For this reason, as for another to be mentioned presently, the state is unfitted to comprise these within its own organization. It must stand for what is recognized, by the political consciousness of the times, as the common concern of the people. No doubt the determination of what is the common concern must be arrived at by (at most) a majority-decision and is liable to be consciously and unconsciously perverted by particular dominant interests. But the principle is sufficiently clear. It is obvious that partial as well as intimate interests belong properly to special associations and not to the state. . . .

Not only because of its universality but still more because of its coercive sanction, the law of the state has a limited competence. The root of obedience

to law is not coercion but the will to obey; nevertheless law takes the form of an imperative. It can therefore regulate only the external order of society. Its unbending rigour is applicable only to the outer aspects of conduct. Therefore, as Green has very clearly expressed it, "the only acts which it *ought* to enjoin or forbid are those of which the doing or not doing, *from whatever motive*, is necessary to the moral end of society." Other social influences may indeed, must indeed, support the law, but they derive, not from the state, but from the community whose agent it is recognized to be. There are other sanctions within society that are applied with greater persuasion. Custom and tradition hold men within their ways. Mode and fashion move them as the wind moves the surface of the waters. And beyond these there lies the sense of spiritual values—of all forces the most compelling to the sensitive and creative mind, while capable, as many a crisis has revealed, of stirring the hearts of a whole people.

It is not to belittle the state that we have drawn these distinctions, but to define it. Its true sphere is so vast, its task so endless, that no rightful limitations can detract from its worth. On the contrary, they reveal the conditions under which alone it can achieve its greatest measure of success. They show us not only what the state *is*, but . . . they teach us what the state *can* be.

Now at length we have arrived at our definition. *The state is an association which, acting through law as promulgated by a government endowed to this end with coercive power, maintains within a community territorially demarcated the universal external conditions of social order.*

## Book One

### I. THE FAMILY AND THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Origins are always obscure. If we endeavour to explain the genesis of any event that happens in our own days and seemingly before our very eyes, a scientific discovery, a new religion, a war, a revolution, we never get back to the simple fountain-head, the initial impulse whence it is derived. The stream we follow upwards brings us at length to difficult marshes and underground pools, never to a clear spring. If that is true of near events, how much harder is the task to trace the origins of social phenomena in the unknown and ever receding past. Such a task would in any case be out of place here, where our main object is to understand and reveal the present character, itself sufficiently perplexing, of the greatest of social structures. But we know something of its earliest forms, and even of societies where it is still unrevealed in any form; and this knowledge may shed some light, though dim, on the essential meaning of the state. If we know that societies have lived without the state, if we

know why and how the state has grown from small beginnings to its great dominance, we may be saved some misunderstandings which beset the political thinking of our time.

In our study of the state we shall not attempt to go beyond the social stage where men are already associated in kin-groups, the clan, or close union of families, the phratry or kin-brotherhood, and the tribe or gens, as we may name them in order of size. Such kin-groupings, which disappear in the process of civilization, are characteristic of primitive society when it has attained a range of unity wider than the rude family cohesion of the cave-dweller and other types of prehistoric man. No elaborate theory is required to explain why the kin-group represents the normal form of social growth beyond the family life. The first of all societies, in beast and bird and man, is the family, but it cannot exist in mere isolation. The mating impulse leads the adolescent outside the old family to form a new one. Each new family is the union of two families. The web of blood-relationship is thus woven and rewoven, which creates and sustains the kin with all its potentialities of extension and subdivision. The kin arises out of the recognition of consanguinity, but it grows into an order of society. . . .

. . . [There have been] two institutions of kinship which, like the wider kin-association itself, have passed in the process of civilization but which in early society must have been important agencies of its maintenance. The institution of exogamy has been the subject of much study and of much speculation. The prohibition to marry within one's own clan or, in totemistic society very generally, one's own totem group, is extremely widespread, and is often combined with the specific injunction to marry within one other clan or totem group. This is the rigid interpretation and formulation by the "savage" mind of the same principle which appears in our "table of forbidden degrees." Whatever the fundamental instinct that explains the centrifugal tendency of sex, the fact is beyond question. It may be the expression of deep biological forces, but it acquires, if it does not from the first possess, a very clear social significance. It is the source of the primary articulation of society beyond the family, and the greatest agency toward the maintenance of the tribal structure. The outward direction of the sex-instinct may have occasioned much bickering and strife, as suggested by the women-seeking raids and rapes of primitive groups, but the more permanent effect is the extended system of relationship under the covering aegis of the kin. So imperious an instinct was inevitably subjected, within the group which it created, to social control, and that control took, after the nature of savage institutions, the rigid form of exogamy, with its bloc-division of the inter-marriageable.

The other kinship-institution which has been superseded by civilization is



the "matriarchal" family. "Matriarchal" and "Matriarchate" are now admitted to be misleading terms for the relationship in question. There is no "mother-rule," still less "woman-rule" under the conditions of primitive society. Even the term "mother-right," now commonly applied to the institution, over-emphasizes the social position of women. It was no exalted respect for women, but the logic of an age wherein maternity was a far more conclusive guide than paternity, strengthened by the permanent truth that the relation of the mother to the child is always more impressive and more profound than that of fatherhood, which must have led to the general practice of tracing descent through the female line, creating the misnamed "matriarchal" family. . . .

A little reflection will show that this institution too played a considerable part in the extension and maintenance of the social structure. It gave the woman, the wife and mother, a social rather than a personal standing. The "natural" dominance of the male is counterbalanced, so far as the union of families goes, by the social importance of the female. Thus the new family is bound in two different ways to its two sources, and the outward reach of the mating impulse accomplishes more than the mere adoption of wife or husband into the opposite group. It knits very closely a whole group, and accomplishes the transition from the family to the community. In fact, all that was necessary, in order that the greater community should arise, was that men should have the *sense* of the family. For the family, though in some respects the most jealous and secluded of groups, has one essential character which distinguishes it from tribe or nation. It must, in every generation, break up. Its members must in every generation go beyond it to another family, in order that it shall re-exist. If the sense of the family persists only to the second generation, the greater society is already in being, and imperceptibly it transcends the principle of kin.

Thus the foundation of the social structure is built through the operation of the creative impulses of sex as these are controlled by the primitive understanding of the order within which they may find their least precarious satisfaction.

But another factor must be added at this point. Closely related to the control of sex is the control of property. We need only think of such institutions as the dowry, the preparation for and the maintenance of the home, the inheritance of wealth, to realize that even to-day property is to a very large degree a family rather than an individual interest. It was so even more intensely under primitive conditions. In primitive life of all types there are few goods that are consumed other than by family participation. There are in other words scarcely

any luxuries, scarcely any individualized enjoyments. What scanty capital exists, the warrior's bow and spear no less than the herdsman's flock, the fisherman's boat, and the cultivator's field, finds its normal use in the sustenance of the family life. It exists for the sake of the family as a whole, a family possession owned and controlled by the individual who is its head. It is not here implied that the instinct of property is derived from the instinct of sex. Our point is that under the conditions of early society the two are in practice indissoluble. The enjoyment of property falls within the life of the family. The problem of property, its secure possession and orderly disposal, is solved by a certain form of family organization. The problem of the family, its permanence against the waning and variability of the initial sex-impulse, is solved by its association with the unswerving desire for the control of property. It is needless to add that the woman herself, together with the offspring of the family union, took much of the aspect of property, and that the regard for woman's virtue (significant term) and the care for her well-being and maintenance depended in no small measure on this fact. The respect for personality is too weak under primitive conditions, perhaps even to this day, to be the basis of any permanent institution. . . .

The interaction of the interests of sex and property in the building of the social structure is well illustrated if we turn from the "matriarchal" to the "patriarchal" family. The process of domestication has now advanced. The patriarch owns "capital" in the original sense of the term, counting his wealth by *head*. The control and above all the inheritance of this self-breeding wealth, the domesticated animal, and of the land on which it breeds, must have been a strong influence against a system which sent the sons away from the home of the father to that of the father-in-law. The increase of property meant the increasing social dominance of the male, and with it went other forces which strengthened the importance, and thereby assured the fact, of paternity. We cannot here pursue the causes of this revolution, and must be content with the undoubted fact that the relatively settled pastoral life, as even more obviously the life of agriculture accorded with, and in a sense made necessary, the patriarchal family.

With the inheritance of substantial property the importance of ancestry grew. The name of the father was the symbol of heirship; the patronymic (such as -son or -ing or -off, mac- or de- or ben-) became a permanent title. The magic of names reinforced the sense of kinship, as the course of generations enlarged the group. The blood-bond of sonship changed imperceptibly into the social bond of the wider brotherhood. The authority of the father passes into the power of the chief. Once more under the aegis of kinship new

forms arise which transcend it. Kinship creates society and society at length creates the state.

## II. THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND THE STATE

Every social phenomenon has three aspects which we may perhaps liken, though without laying stress on the comparison, to body, mind, and environment, the three primal characters of everything that lives. Thus the "body" of the family consists in the facts of sex, parenthood and consanguinity; its "mind" or "spirit" in the sentiments and instincts, fear, appetite, love, and affection, which give vitality to these facts; and its "environment" in the order of protection, authority, and mutual service which the "spirit" creates by its relation to the "body." To use more technical and perhaps less misleading terms, these three constitute the objective, the subjective, and the institutional factors which together form the complete social phenomenon. Likewise the community, as we saw it emerge out of the family life, has an objective factor in contiguity, assimilation, and the wider kinship; a subjective factor in the feeling of "brotherhood" and "loyalty," the sense of common tradition and of common destiny; and an institutional factor in the custom which permeates and regulates the conduct of its members. Finally the state, itself a social superstructure supported by those factors that properly belong to the community, has its special outward mark of territorial inclusiveness; its subjective character of citizenship in its various expressions, of which nationalism is perhaps the most complete; and its institutional criterion in the form of political sovereignty and law. This political superstructure is still, in spite of these distinctive factors, too easily confounded with the community itself, to the hurt alike of our understanding and of our civilization. It will help to remove this misconception if we can show how the state in its rudimentary form, long before it could arrogate any such false claim, arose within the earlier life of society.

A brief sketch of the characteristic life of the primitive community will enable us to appreciate the feeble, experimental beginnings of the great state. . . . [The] ultimate traits of such a community are most easily understood if we try to think away the apparatus of civilization. Experience was stored in oral tradition, there being no written speech, no technique of education, no record of science. The subjective aberrations of the human mind had full play wherever the immediate lessons of experience left it uncontrolled. The ghosts of the dead peopled the night together with the monsters of the imagination. The forces of nature became dim personal powers, to be feared and placated, sometimes to be "worked" by the power of magic, the mechanical mysteries of the rain-maker, the exorcist, the "medicine-man." As Frazer puts it, "men mistook the order of their ideas for the order of nature," and consequently

lived in an exceedingly narrow world which outside of a small circle of facts was mere mythology. The fear of misunderstood forces cramped and subdued and distorted the thoughts of men.

Within a community so lacking in the means of control over nature, so bound to the necessities of immediate sustenance on the one hand, and so free on the other to accept the irrational reasoning of the untutored mind, there could be little of that internal differentiation which is so marked among more advanced peoples. In civilization we find within a single community very marked gradations of class and culture, due to the complexity of organization, the inequality of opportunity, the vast specialization of knowledge as well as of function. A primitive community is far more homogeneous. Its culture is very strictly a "folk-culture." There are, as between primitive peoples, the most striking differences of customs, manners and morals, but within each community, save for the distinction due to age and sex, an identity of customs, manners, and morals is rigorously prescribed by and for the folk.

This brings us to what is, sociologically, the most significant distinction between primitive and advanced society. In the former "custom is the king of men." Custom is often described as "unwritten law," but we must realize that it differs wholly from the political code, above all because it is supported and enforced and, though not in any conscious manner, made by the community and not at all by the state. In fact the early growth of the state depends on the transformation of customs into laws. The whole life of primitive peoples is custom-ridden. There is a right way of doing everything, and only one right way. Outside the necessary technique of hunting and fishing and canoe-building, of sowing and planting and harvesting, of carrying on trade and waging war, of preparing food and of healing the sick, there is another and often very complicated technique of ceremonial observance which to the savage is equally authoritative. There is a prescribed way for giving a feast and for making love. There are rights which are demanded at every season and conjuncture. Puberty and every life-transition become occasions of solemn recognition. The primal facts of birth, marriage, and death are given an elaborate social setting. Natural phenomena are translated into social institutions by the ritual attached to their occurrence. Such observances are guarded by rigorous sanction, and the dreadful powers of a misknown universe jealously attend their violation. If the community punishes the offender against custom, it is often to avert the less discriminate interposition of these formidable guardians of the social way. The acts which are forbidden are even more numerous than those which are enjoined, and taboo is the invariable concomitant of custom.

It is obvious that under all such systems individual incentive is closely cir-



cumscribed. Men are, as it were, nearer to the common mould of the race. They walk in predetermined ways, expressive of their own conformity to type. The individual is not self-directed in any of the important concerns of his life. He has neither the capacity nor the social sanction for liberty. He follows the narrow trail beaten by thousands of feet and dares not explore the perils of diversity. He remains always the ward of his society. Morality is the fulfilment of custom, and does not include that higher, more difficult, but truly ethical law which bids a man be loyal to his own sense of values, even where it conflicts with the accepted creed. Lacking any true conception of morality he lacks also, at the other end, the definite sense of legality. The customary is both the right and the permitted. In civilized life, apart from the supra-social control which religion may exercise, a trinity of sanctions preside over conduct, that of the law, that of the social milieu, and that of the "heart." In primitive life they are merged in the one pervasive form of communal custom. And religion too is in large part but the reinforcement of that custom by the invocation of another and more formidable array of guardians.

This communal morality has in the light of a more advanced civilization two grave defects. On the one hand it tends to repress that personal sense of initiative and responsibility from which all the finer processes of human achievement take their rise. On the other hand it limits the range and thus distorts the meaning of the social values which it also supports. Just as a tribal God is the contradiction of a religious idea by the addition of the adjective, so, if less obviously, are the principles of justice and honour stultified when they do not apply to men as men but only as kinsmen or members of the group. . . .

If we regard this primitive morality as a low level beyond which the communities of our civilization have in greater or less degree advanced, it should be clearly understood that we so describe it not because the principles inculcated are themselves "low," for sometimes they surprise us by their austerity and simplicity—nor because they are less effective in binding society, for they are often extremely effective as social bonds. But the very fact that morality is wholly determined as communal usage reveals the childishness of a people, the absence of inner strength and guidance, the weakness of personality which must move in grooves or else suffer disintegration. The system accords with the life; its restrictiveness is the price of existence. Thus the disturbance of the system caused by contact with a freer and more flexible civilization may have fatal consequences, and the well-intentioned "reforms" of alien governments and of proselytizing missionaries may prove the instruments of social death. The cohesion of a primitive society is quite different from that of our own. It is communistic, not so much in the narrower economic sense, but in the

form of the spiritual life. Its feasts and solemn occasions, its lore, its song and dance, its whole armament of traditions and customs, bind each member within the narrow circle of social security.

The foregoing sketch may help us to understand the slow beginnings of the state, and to justify our contention that the state is a structure not coeval and co-extensive with society, but built within it as a determinate order for the attainment of specific ends. The earliest forms of the state are extremely narrow in their aims and powers. They scarcely touch the inner purposes of the community, which are in the far safer wardship of custom. Apart from the organization of defence and offence, and the rudimentary organization of "justice," they are more concerned with the privileges and powers of the dominant few than with the welfare of the community. Their rulers are heroes or demi-gods or warriors, or else their descendants, who exercise authority, not strictly as law-givers but as privileged persons. If such rulers create social order, it is by quelling rival claims to power, within or without the state, not by establishing a code. They enforce custom long before they make law; the judges come before the kings. As diversity increases and disturbances from within or from without trouble the ancient order, there arise leaders who set out in a code those portions of the inheritance of custom which demand conscious reinforcement. These, however, are relatively late developments, after the art of writing or inscribing on stone was well advanced. But even such surviving examples as the Twelve Tables, the laws of "Moses," and the code of Hammurabi show how far they still are from attaining the true criterion of political law. It is significant that such codes are usually represented as directly handed to the law-giver from a divine source. Hammurabi receives them from Shamash, as Moses from Jehovah. And in their content they make no distinction between ceremonial injunction, moral and religious observance, and true legal enactment.

It might generally be stated, without much exaggeration, that the activities of early government are scarcely political at all. Rulers are privileged beings who gratify their sense of personal power by the capricious and arbitrary exercise of it over their subjects. The early kings of the relatively high civilization of Egypt, such as the Thinitae, have the power of life and death, can seize the women and the property of their subjects at will, and are revered as incarnate Gods. But they dare to alter scarce one tittle of the ceremonies and institutions of the people whose persons and wealth they dispose of so freely. There is a might greater than the majesty of kings. There is a stability which their mere privileges do not touch. It is the immanent sense of the due order

of society, to protect and develop *one* great part of which the state at last comes to recognize as its true function and only justification.

The display of leadership and the exercise of authority is found wherever society exists. It gives form and character to an urchins' club as well as to a cabinet committee; to a gang of thieves as well as to a convocation of clerics. But no one would call all such leadership and authority "political," and neither should we say that wherever we find a "headman" in a savage tribe we are in the presence of the state. We cannot say when or where the state begins. It is implicit in the universal tendency to leadership and subordination, but it only emerges when authority becomes government and custom is translated into law.

Thus the right of men and families to quarrel interfered with their service of the chief and created an indiscipline which touched his authority. What more natural than that he should restrict that liberty by pains and penalties? The evolution of penal law is very significant here. The ancient rule of retaliation—"an eye for an eye," "a tooth for a tooth"—obviously goes back to the pre-political stage. It was the injured man or his group that found satisfaction in that primitive revenge, and we must in fact remember that "revenge" is a personal and not a political category. "The avenger of blood himself shall slay the murderer: when he meeteth him, he shall slay him" (Num. xxxv. 19). It is above all the kinsman's duty sanctioned by custom and often enforced by the dreadful shapes of expiatory divinities. Orestes must avenge on his own mother his father's death. Vengeance belongs to the kin, not to the state. Its mode is often prescribed in most meticulous form. The curious rigour of this barbaric logic is seen in such a case as the following. "A boy who had climbed a tree happened to fall down right on the head of his little comrade standing below. The comrade died immediately; and the unlucky climber was in consequence sentenced to be killed in the same way as he had killed the other boy, that is, the dead boy's brother should climb the tree in his turn, and tumble down on the other's head till he killed him." In other cases revenge is modified into the milder expiation of the fine, embodying the idea of "damages" later translated, for an entirely different type of offence, into a principle of the "civil" code. Thus it is still characteristic of Chinese society that an appeal to the family of the offender is made for compensation. But in such cases the relation of the state to the act is not yet envisaged.

The social, not the political, significance of certain offences, leads, on the other hand, to penal action undertaken by the community as a whole. We need only refer to the story of Achan by way of illustration. The offence of Achan "troubled" Israel, and all Israel stoned him with stones—including, for

safety's sake, his family with the sinner (Joshua vii. 24-6). The motive is here transformed. It is to protect society, if not from the direct social consequences of such conduct, at least from the general "wrath of God," that the offender is punished. It is, in so far, the true political motive, but the instrument is not yet the state.

There are various aspects of this process which are easily discerned. The "natural" authority of the paterfamilias prepared the way for the tribal chief. The former wields authority over wife and children, he is the guardian and interpreter of custom, the priest and often the medicine-man within the circle. As the "old men" convert sporadic meetings into the regular "council" of elders, these functions receive in part the support of a wider community, and in part are transferred to the chiefs or leaders who, here too, "naturally" arise. At first there is no thought of created law, no organization of government save for the affirming of the *mores*, the conduct of ceremonies, and the punishment of offenders. As has been so clearly shown by Maine, Bagehot, and others, the making of law in the strict sense, which is the central function of the modern state, is foreign to primitive communities. "Custom is the king of men." Within it is woven the religious principle, which finds for human life a law that is never made by man and is fearfully enforced by powers beyond his range. Magic adds its strange mechanism, so that "crime" is punished automatically or by the skill of the magician. There remained for the rudimentary state only a narrow group of executive functions which the logic of power as well as the necessities of order extended into the vast control exercised by the developed state.

We may observe this process in its further development in the history of the Anglo-Saxon people. At first the courts merely deliver the communal law, and they lack executive power. It is still for the family to take vengeance, and the blood-feud flourishes. But "step by step as the power of the state waxes, the self-centred and self-helping autonomy of the kindred wanes. Private feud is controlled, regulated, put, one may say, into a legal harness; the avenging and the protecting clan of the slain and the slayer are made pledges and auxiliaries of public justice."

The indiscipline, the insecurity, the wastefulness, and the endless strife appertaining to these forms of revenge or retribution, so well illustrated by such surviving instances as the blood-feud in Albania, Montenegro, and Corsica, or again by the indiscriminate mass-punishment by lynching in America, were strong inducements for the intervention of the nascent state. At first it merely intervenes. It protects the custom rather than the society. It prevents the powerful offender from going scot-free and it prevents the strong avenger



from exceeding in his anger the limits of retaliation. To achieve these ends it must take over the task of punishment. But in so doing it imperceptibly introduces the political ground of punishment. For what is the use of retaliation or even retribution to the *state*? What satisfaction does it bring to the *state* that it should "hurt back" one of its own members because he has hurt another? Why should it multiply its own corporate hurt? Inevitably the idea of social protection, with its concomitants of reformation as well as prevention, modify the whole system. The *custom* of punishment recedes into the regions of social ostracism, and the political principle of punishment takes its place. In Anglo-Saxon England the development of the "king's peace" proclaims the change which made punishment a function of the state, justified by the need of public order and private protection. It is a transformation of motive that is even to-day far from being complete. Still the state is understood as intervening for the sake of assuring a duly limited, a "just" retribution. But the process has advanced and the state has conquered a new sphere.

### III. AUTHORITY AND CLASS

Social protection and the ambition of power—these are the two most diverse but most mingled motives which stimulated the formation of state-institutions. The former impelled the rulers, as it were from below, since alike their function and their authority required them to consider the members or citizens of the state; the latter actuated them from within. When the two motives combined to inspire the same course of action, there the state found its surest ground and its quickest development. Such is the history of the political institution of punishment, involving as it did the establishment of a judicial system, a code of criminal law, and an executive charged with its enforcement. The panoply of justice obviously increased the power of the government, while at the same time it was a necessary instrument of social order. The like combination of motives worked for the control of the state over property and for its regulation of the system of sexual relations, since in these matters the drive of human instincts is most apt to transgress the restrictions of custom and to cause social disintegration. But nowhere were the two motives so cunningly and so inextricably combined as in the provision of armed force against external foes. Here the demand for protection took on its most insistent form, and here also it most directly worked for the aggrandizement of political authority. Here too, and here alone, the power of the chief was made manifest as the power of the people as well. Elsewhere the exaltation of the ruler was the abasement of his subjects, but here his exaltation was also theirs. They shared with him the necessity of deliverance and security, the feeling of glory and

triumph. So strong a conjuncture—strong still to-day as in the primitive world—turned the growing state into an agency of dominance, creating peace within and war abroad.

It would be easy to show, by many evidences, how various early states, under the influence of the motives already mentioned, gradually created for themselves an organization at length so far-reaching that with it came to be identified society itself. But the proportions of this work limit us to the mere indications we have just offered. We must, instead, turn to another aspect of the rising state, without consideration of which our idea of the process by which it developed, within and in a sense above the community, would be quite one-sided. We have hitherto spoken of the state in terms of ruler and subjects, the government and the governed. This is the legal aspect, but the internal structure of the state is not built on any such simple dichotomy. The state creates not only order but orders. Power is never a mere subordination of the many to the one. It is, always, a hierarchy. It implies a class-structure. Power is the effective exercise of will, but, even if it seems to pertain to the will of one, it requires a complex and graded organization of supporting wills, wills that participate no less than wills that acquiesce.

The growth of political power thus necessitates important changes in the social structure. These changes consist in the establishment or re-formation of social classes in terms of relative dominance and subjection. The headman of a primitive tribe might securely depend on the support of the communal custom of which he was the custodian, but the ruler who organizes armed forces, takes regular toll of the community's wealth, and settles the disputes of property and of sex, needs the support of a privileged class whose interests are more nearly identified with his own. Thus we may explain the fact that in the simpler stages of customary determination the organization of the people has a more democratic appearance than later on when the state has definitely emerged. We might cite the descriptions of Caesar and Tacitus of the Gaulish and Germanic tribes, or the accounts of such present-day peoples as the nomads of the Asiatic plains or certain tribes of American Indians. Such primitive democracies exist because of the rudimentary organization of power, in sharp contrast to modern democracies which are only possible by reason of a high development of the system of political control.

The origins of this class-structure are of course inherent in the inequality of human conditions. There are inner and outer circles of kinship. There are prouder and more humble pretensions of descent. There is authority that accrues to age and experience—until time weakens it again. There is the greater

prestige and power of the successful warrior and of the man whose herds are larger or whose lands are more fertile or wider. There is a lore which becomes the jealously guarded possession of individuals or families. There are men honoured for their skill or cunning or physical powers. Thus select fraternities and cliques arise, the natural oligarchies of mankind. They claim prerogatives and superior rights. They strengthen their claims by attaching themselves to the power of the growing state. They thus at once secure their own ends and give to government the social support which its extended authority requires. In the process, however, the state becomes a class-state, tribal custom is narrowed by group privilege, and the polity of the state moves still farther towards the aims of dominance and away from those of the common welfare.

A good illustration of the way in which the graded social order develops within the community and thereby fosters political oligarchy is found in the history of the "secret societies" which are so characteristic of primitive life. The following passage well summarizes the evolution of these societies:

However striking may be the difference between such an institution as the *Bora* of the Australian natives and a tribal secret society like the *Dukduk* of the Bismarck Archipelago or the *Egbo* of West Africa, they appear, in the last analysis, to be due fundamentally to the changes brought about when once the principle of limitation of membership is introduced. The process which converts the puberty-institution into the secret societies of peoples more advanced in culture, seems in general to be that of the gradual shrinking of the earlier inclusive and democratic organization consisting of all the members of the tribe. The outcome of this process, on the one hand, is a limitation of the membership of the organization to those only who are able to satisfy the necessary entrance-requirements; and, on the other hand, the establishment in the fraternity so formed of various degrees through which candidates may pass in succession. With the fuller development of secret society characteristics, these degrees become more numerous, and passage through them more costly. The members of the higher degrees, forming an inner circle of picked initiates, then control the organization in their own interests.

This is merely an instance of the way in which, as social life grows more complex, the simpler and the more democratic rule of custom gives place to a new order of subordination and control. This is the opportunity of the state. It becomes more essential to social order, but it also becomes more restrictive. The state becomes identified with a privileged class. It stands for dominance and obedience, a category in terms of which the narrow legalist doctrine of the Austinians still seeks to interpret its nature. The state becomes the embodiment of power, but only in proportion as it becomes the instrument of a class, only as it is identified with a privileged order. . . .

## MAX WEBER

**M**AX WEBER (1864-1920), German sociologist, is generally recognized as one of the most important and influential social scientists of the past hundred years. Weber had a precocious mind which developed in an atmosphere altogether congenial to his intellectual preoccupations. He came in time to command the techniques of a variety of disciplines—jurisprudence, history, economics, theology, philosophy, and philology—as well as an almost encyclopedic grasp of factual matters. He was a specialist in such diverse areas as legal history, economic history, world religions, oriental civilization, urbanism, and music. Moreover, he had a special talent for crystallizing great masses of fact into coherent and intelligible patterns by means of penetrating insights, and for elaborating these insights into theoretical concepts of wide generality and particular incisiveness. Yet Weber's interests were never exclusively academic, nor were his attitudes those of the dispassionate scholar. From his early youth, he was a close student of the current political scene, and throughout his life he felt an inner conflict between the calling of science and the calling of practical political action. His passionate concern with the facts of human society, past and present, was always carried on in terms of discovering analogues to current situations, guidance for present conduct and decision, and so reflected his continued quest for personal orientation in the modern world. Methodologically, Weber felt that the human individual must be the "basic unit" of social inquiry; and though he recognized states and associations to be modes of human interaction, his main concern was with the motives of actors who found themselves in typical situations, and these motives he judged in the light of their intended and unintended consequences. Hence his outlook was basically pragmatic. As one writer has phrased it, "Weber the scholar always wrote from the point of view of Weber the active politician."

During Weber's lifetime, a number of thinkers in Germany were distinguishing between the subject matters and methods of the natural sciences (*Naturwissenschaften*) and the "human" sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*). The latter, presumably, dealt with unique genetic sequences involving human actions and intentions, and, because unique things presumably bear no significant comparisons, it was concluded that the general concepts of the natural sciences were inapplicable to human events. Rather, each such sequence must be taken on its own terms and apprehended "subjectively," by means of some sort of empathic "understanding" (*Verstehen*) of the internal states of mind of the actors involved in the sequence. Though Weber retained a modified version of *Verstehen*, he maintained that science is basically abstractive and that generalization is the condition of all intellectual comprehension. As a methodological instrument which would at once be general and particular, he developed the notion of "ideal-types," generalized models of concrete situations which could be applied to analogous cases. The ideal-type was a "rational" model, and any deviation in an actual situation from an ideal-type could be discerned, and the causal factors of the deviations could be sought. Hence com-



parison of situations, each of which approximated at least roughly to the type, was possible and fruitful.

Part of Weber's genius lay in his ability to discriminate the similarities and dissimilarities of diverse cultures as well as of diverse structures of human action. Though he felt that the "irrational" deviations could be causally explained, Weber was sufficiently impressed with the complexity of human motivations to distrust simple monocausal accounts, so that, though he was deeply influenced by Marx, he could not accept a simple reduction of all social structures to functions of the productive process. The essence of modern capitalism, for example, was for him not class struggle, but "the rational organization of free labor," and this, in turn, is an instance of what Weber calls "bureaucracy." But bureaucracy on a large scale is not confined to modern Western capitalism: its essential features can be found, he showed, in Egypt, in the late Roman Empire, the Chinese Empire, the Roman Catholic Church, and in the modern European state. So in a sense, the study of capitalism can be assimilated to the study of political structures with as much ease, and perhaps as much fruitfulness, as the assimilation of political structures to economic structures.

It is characteristic of Weber that he should treat even economic behavior in terms of authority and power, and the means of their exertion. Authority is the central fact and organizing concept in the study of any "corporate group" (*Verband*); and the latter must be analyzed into a system of "rôles" which the individual members assume with respect to authority. Yet authority, in order to be accepted and institutionalized, must be justified by some claim to legitimacy which the members of the group are willing to accept. Weber distinguishes three types of such claim, and hence three types of authority: *rational-legal*, where authority is justified by a set of rules which are accepted on the grounds of their "rationality"; *traditional*, where the person in authority invokes a set of institutions, presumed timeless and immemorial, which he personally represents; and *charismatic*, where authority rests on the personal force of an inspiring leader. Charismatic leaders may thus defy rules and traditions and lay claim to higher sanctions; and Weber sometimes tends to view history as an alternation between rationalized bureaucratic routine, on the one hand, and the creative, spontaneous, routine-shattering force of the charismatic leader on the other. In the following selection from a lecture which he delivered in 1918 in Munich, Weber sets forth his basic conception of politics and the state, and introduces his conception of bureaucracy, for which he had the same type of grudging admiration that Marx had for the bourgeois system of enterprise.

Weber studied law at Heidelberg, later accepting the position of *privatdozent* at the University of Berlin. He wrote his doctoral thesis on the *History of Agrarian Institutions*, and was then appointed professor of economics at Freiburg. Two years later (1896) he accepted the chair of economics at Heidelberg, but he was prevented from taking an active teaching role by a prolonged period of serious mental depression. In 1904 he visited America, where he was an enthusiastic observer of bureaucracy in the modern democratic state. In 1918 he began to lecture at the University of Munich, where he died at the height of his powers. He left behind him a vast number of books and articles, some of which have been translated into English, under the following titles: *General Economic History* (1927);

*The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1930); *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (1947); *Ancient Judaism* (1952); *Methodological Foundations of Sociology* (1938). A collection of his most important statements appeared in the book *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (1946), for which Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills acted as co-editors and translators. It is from this book that the following selection has been taken.



## POLITICS AS A VOCATION

### [Part I]

. . . What do we understand by politics? The concept is extremely broad and comprises any kind of *independent* leadership in action. One speaks of the currency policy of the banks . . . of the strike policy of a trade union; one may speak of the educational policy of a municipality or a township, of the policy of the president of a voluntary association, and, finally, even of the policy of a prudent wife who seeks to guide her husband. Tonight, our reflections are, of course, not based upon such a broad concept. We wish to understand by politics only the leadership, or the influencing of the leadership, of a *political* association, hence today, of a *state*.

But what is a "political" association from the sociological point of view? What is a "state?" Sociologically, the state cannot be defined in terms of its ends. There is scarcely any task that some political association has not taken in hand, and there is no task that one could say has always been exclusive and peculiar to those associations which are designated as political ones: today the state, or historically, those associations which have been the predecessors of the modern state. Ultimately, one can define the modern state sociologically only in terms of the specific *means* peculiar to it, as to every political association, namely, the use of physical force.

"Every state is founded on force," said Trotsky at Brest-Litovsk. That is indeed right. If no social institutions existed which knew the use of violence, then the concept of "state" would be eliminated, and a condition would emerge that could be designated as "anarchy," in the specific sense of this word. Of course, force is certainly not the normal or the only means of the state—nobody says that—but force is a means specific to the state. Today the relation between

---

This selection is from *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, translated, edited, and with an introduction by H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, Copyright 1946 by Oxford University Press, Inc., N.Y., pp. 77–80, 81–84, 84–86, 88–90, 92–96, 99–102, 103, 107–110, 114–122, 125–127, 128, by permission of the publisher.

the state and violence is an especially intimate one. In the past, the most varied institutions—beginning with the sib—have known the use of physical force as quite normal. Today, however, we have to say that a state is a human community that (successfully) claims the *monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force* within a given territory. Note that “territory” is one of the characteristics of the state. Specifically, at the present time, the right to use physical force is ascribed to other institutions or to individuals only to the extent to which the state permits it. The state is considered the sole source of the “right” to use violence. Hence, “politics” for us means striving to share power or striving to influence the distribution of power, either among states or among groups within a state.

This corresponds essentially to ordinary usage. When a question is said to be a “political” question, when a cabinet minister or an official is said to be a “political” official, or when a decision is said to be “politically” determined, what is always meant is that interests in the distribution, maintenance, or transfer of power are decisive for answering the questions and determining the decision or the official’s sphere of activity. He who is active in politics strives for power either as a means in serving other aims, ideal or egoistic, or as “power for power’s sake,” that is, in order to enjoy the prestige-feeling that power gives.

Like the political institutions historically preceding it, the state is a relation of men dominating men, a relation supported by means of legitimate (i.e. considered to be legitimate) violence. If the state is to exist, the dominated must obey the authority claimed by the powers that be. When and why do men obey? Upon what inner justifications and upon what external means does this domination rest?

To begin with, in principle, there are three inner justifications, hence basic *legitimations* of domination.

First, the authority of the “eternal yesterday,” i.e. of the mores sanctified through the unimaginably ancient recognition and habitual orientation to conform. This is “traditional” domination exercised by the patriarch and the patrimonial prince of yore.

There is the authority of the extraordinary and personal *gift of grace* (charisma), the absolutely personal devotion and personal confidence in revelation, heroism, or other qualities of individual leadership. This is “charismatic” domination, as exercised by the prophet or—in the field of politics—by the elected war lord, the plebiscitarian ruler, the great demagogue, or the political party leader.

Finally, there is domination by virtue of “legality,” by virtue of the belief in

the validity of legal statutes and functional "competence" based on rationally created *rules*. In this case, obedience is expected in discharging statutory obligations. This is domination as exercised by the modern "servant of the state" and by all those bearers of power who in this respect resemble him.

It is understood that, in reality, obedience is determined by highly robust motives of fear and hope—fear of the vengeance of magical powers or of the power-holder, hope for reward in this world or in the beyond—and besides all this, by interests of the most varied sort. Of this we shall speak presently. However, in asking for the "legitimations" of this obedience, one meets with these three "pure" types: "traditional," "charismatic," and "legal."

These conceptions of legitimacy and their inner justifications are of very great significance for the structure of domination. To be sure, the pure types are rarely found in reality. But today we cannot deal with the highly complex variants, transitions, and combinations of these pure types, which problems belong to "political science." Here we are interested above all in the second of these types: domination by virtue of the devotion of those who obey the purely personal "charisma" of the "leader." For this is the root of the idea of a *calling* in its highest expression.

Devotion to the charisma of the prophet, or the leader in war, or to the great demagogue in the *ecclesia* or in parliament, means that the leader is personally recognized as the innerly "called" leader of men. Men do not obey him by virtue of tradition or statute, but because they believe in him. If he is more than a narrow and vain upstart of the moment, the leader lives for his cause and "strives for his work." The devotion of his disciples, his followers, his personal party friends is oriented to his person and to its qualities.

Charismatic leadership has emerged in all places and in all historical epochs. Most importantly in the past, it has emerged in the two figures of the magician and the prophet on the one hand, and in the elected war lord, the gang leader and *condottiere* on the other hand. *Political* leadership in the form of the free "demagogue" who grew from the soil of the city state is of greater concern to us; like the city state, the demagogue is peculiar to the Occident and especially to Mediterranean culture. Furthermore, political leadership in the form of the parliamentary "party leader" has grown on the soil of the constitutional state, which is also indigenous only to the Occident.

These politicians by virtue of a "calling," in the most genuine sense of the word, are of course nowhere the only decisive figures in the cross-currents of the political struggle for power. The sort of auxiliary means that are at their disposal is also highly decisive. How do the politically dominant powers manage to maintain their domination? The question pertains to any kind of domi-



nation, hence also to political domination in all its forms, traditional as well as legal and charismatic.

Organized domination, which calls for continuous administration, requires that human conduct be conditioned to obedience towards those masters who claim to be the bearers of legitimate power. On the other hand, by virtue of this obedience, organized domination requires the control of those material goods which in a given case are necessary for the use of physical violence. Thus, organized domination requires control of the personal executive staff and the material implements of administration.

The administrative staff, which externally represents the organization of political domination, is, of course, like any other organization, bound by obedience to the power-holder and not alone by the concept of legitimacy, of which we have just spoken. There are two other means, both of which appeal to personal interests: material reward and social honor. The fiefs of vassals, the prebends of patrimonial officials, the salaries of modern civil servants, the honor of knights, the privileges of estates, and the honor of the civil servant comprise their respective wages. The fear of losing them is the final and decisive basis for solidarity between the executive staff and the power-holder. There is honor and booty for the followers in war; for the demagogue's following, there are "spoils"—that is, exploitation of the dominated through the monopolization of office—and there are politically determined profits and premiums of vanity. All of these rewards are also derived from the domination exercised by a charismatic leader.

To maintain a dominion by force, certain material goods are required, just as with an economic organization. All states may be classified according to whether they rest on the principle that the staff of men themselves *own* the administrative means, or whether the staff is "separated" from these means of administration. This distinction holds in the same sense in which today we say that the salaried employee and the proletarian in the capitalistic enterprise are "separated" from the material means of production. The power-holder must be able to count on the obedience of the staff members, officials, or whoever else they may be. The administrative means may consist of money, building, war material, vehicles, horses, or whatnot. The question is whether or not the power-holder himself directs and organizes the administration while delegating executive power to personal servants, hired officials, or personal favorites and confidants, who are non-owners, i.e. who do not use the material means of administration in their own right but are directed by the lord. The distinction runs through all administrative organizations of the past.

These political associations in which the material means of administration

are autonomously controlled, wholly or partly, by the dependent administrative staff may be called associations organized in "*estates*." The vassal in the feudal association, for instance, paid out of his own pocket for the administration and judicature of the district enfeoffed to him. He supplied his own equipment and provisions for war, and his sub-vassals did likewise. Of course, this had consequences for the lord's position of power, which only rested upon a relation of personal faith and upon the fact that the legitimacy of his possession of the fief and the social honor of the vassal were derived from the overlord.

However, everywhere, reaching back to the earliest political formations, we also find the lord himself directing the administration. He seeks to take the administration into his own hands by having men personally dependent upon him: slaves, household officials, attendants, personal "favorites," and prebendaries enfeoffed in kind or in money from his magazines. He seeks to defray the expenses from his own pocket, from the revenues of his patrimonium; and he seeks to create an army which is dependent upon him personally because it is equipped and provisioned out of his granaries, magazines, and armories. In the association of "*estates*," the lord rules with the aid of an autonomous "*aristocracy*" and hence shares his domination with it; the lord who personally administers is supported either by members of his household or by plebeians. These are propertyless strata having no social honor of their own; materially, they are completely chained to him and are not backed up by any competing power of their own. All forms of patriarchal and patrimonial domination, Sultanist despotism, and bureaucratic states belong to this latter type. The bureaucratic state order is especially important; in its most rational development, it is precisely characteristic of the modern state.

Everywhere the development of the modern state is initiated through the action of the prince. He paves the way for the expropriation of the autonomous and "private" bearers of executive power who stand beside him, of those who in their own right possess the means of administration, warfare, and financial organization, as well as politically usable goods of all sorts. The whole process is a complete parallel to the development of the capitalist enterprise through gradual expropriation of the independent producers. In the end, the modern state controls the total means of political organization, which actually come together under a single head. No single official personally owns the money he pays out, or the buildings, stores, tools, and war machines he controls. In the contemporary "state"—and this is essential for the concept of state—the "separation" of the administrative staff, of the administrative officials, and of the workers from the material means of administrative organization is com-

pleted. Here the most modern development begins, and we see with our own eyes the attempt to inaugurate the expropriation of this expropriator of the political means, and therewith of political power. . . .

. . . [From] the purely *conceptual* aspect . . . the modern state is a compulsory association which organizes domination. It has been successful in seeking to monopolize the legitimate use of physical force as a means of domination within a territory. To this end the state has combined the material means of organization in the hands of its leaders, and it has expropriated all autonomous functionaries of estates who formerly controlled these means in their own right. The state has taken their positions and now stands in the top place.

During this process of political expropriation, which has occurred with varying success in all countries on earth, "professional politicians" in another sense have emerged. They arose first in the service of a prince. They have been men who, unlike the charismatic leader, have not wished to be lords themselves, but who have entered the *service* of political lords. In the struggle of expropriation, they placed themselves at the princes' disposal and by managing the princes' politics they earned, on the one hand, a living and, on the other hand, an ideal content of life. . . .

Before discussing "professional politicians" in detail, let us clarify in all its aspects the state of affairs their existence presents. Politics, just as economic pursuits, may be a man's avocation or his vocation. One may engage in politics, and hence seek to influence the distribution of power within and between political structures, as an "occasional" politician. We are all "occasional" politicians when we cast our ballot or consummate a similar expression of intention, such as applauding or protesting in a "political" meeting, or delivering a "political" speech, etc. The whole relation of many people to politics is restricted to this. Politics as an avocation is today practiced by all those party agents and heads of voluntary political associations who, as a rule, are politically active only in case of need and for whom politics is, neither materially nor ideally, "their life" in the first place. The same holds for those members of state councils and similar deliberative bodies that function only when summoned. It also holds for rather broad strata of our members of parliament who are politically active only during sessions. . . .

There are two ways of making politics one's vocation: Either one lives "for" politics or one lives "off" politics. By no means is this contrast an exclusive one. The rule is, rather, that man does both, at least in thought, and certainly he also does both in practice. He who lives "for" politics makes politics his life, in an internal sense. Either he enjoys the naked possession of the

power he exerts, or he nourishes his inner balance and self-feeling by the consciousness that his life has *meaning* in the service of a "cause." In this internal sense, every sincere man who lives for a cause also lives off this cause. The distinction hence refers to a much more substantial aspect of the matter, namely, to the economic. He who strives to make politics a permanent *source of income* lives "off" politics as a vocation, whereas he who does not do this lives "for" politics. Under the dominance of the private property order, some—if you wish—very trivial preconditions must exist in order for a person to be able to live "for" politics in this economic sense. Under normal conditions, the politician must be economically independent of the income politics can bring him. This means, quite simply, that the politician must be wealthy or must have a personal position in life which yields a sufficient income.

This is the case, at least in normal circumstances. The war lord's following is just as little concerned about the conditions of a normal economy as is the street crowd following of the revolutionary hero. Both live off booty, plunder, confiscations, contributions, and the imposition of worthless and compulsory means of tender, which in essence amounts to the same thing. But necessarily, these are extraordinary phenomena. In everyday economic life, only some wealth serves the purpose of making a man economically independent. Yet this alone does not suffice. The professional politician must also be economically "dispensable," that is, his income must not depend upon the fact that he constantly and personally places his ability and thinking entirely, or at least by far predominantly, in the service of economic acquisition. In the most unconditional way, the rentier is dispensable in this sense. Hence, he is a man who receives completely unearned income. He may be the territorial lord of the past or the large landowner and aristocrat of the present who receives ground rent. In Antiquity and the Middle Ages they who received slave or serf rents or in modern times rent from shares or bonds or similar sources—these are rentiers.

Neither the worker nor—and this has to be noted well—the entrepreneur, especially the modern, large-scale entrepreneur, is economically dispensable in this sense. For it is precisely the entrepreneur who is tied to his enterprise and is therefore *not* dispensable. This holds for the entrepreneur in industry far more than for the entrepreneur in agriculture, considering the seasonal character of agriculture. In the main, it is very difficult for the entrepreneur to be represented in his enterprise by someone else, even temporarily. He is as little dispensable as is the medical doctor, and the more eminent and busy he is the less dispensable he is. For purely organizational reasons, it is easier for the lawyer to be dispensable; and therefore the lawyer has played an incomparably



greater, and often even a dominant, role as a professional politician. We shall not continue in this classification; rather let us clarify some of its ramifications.

The leadership of a state or of a party by men who (in the economic sense of the word) live exclusively for politics and not off politics means necessarily a "plutocratic" recruitment of the leading political strata. To be sure, this does not mean that such plutocratic leadership signifies at the same time that the politically dominant strata will not also seek to live "off" politics, and hence that the dominant stratum will not usually exploit their political domination in their own economic interest. All that is unquestionable, of course. There has never been such a stratum that has not somehow lived "off" politics. Only this is meant: that the professional politician need not seek remuneration directly for his political work, whereas every politician without means must absolutely claim this. On the other hand, we do not mean to say that the propertyless politician will pursue private economic advantages through politics, exclusively, or even predominantly. Nor do we mean that he will not think, in the first place, of "the subject matter." Nothing would be more incorrect. According to all experience, a care for the economic "security" of his existence is consciously or unconsciously a cardinal point in the whole life orientation of the wealthy man. A quite reckless and unreserved political idealism is found if not exclusively at least predominantly among those strata who by virtue of their propertylessness stand entirely outside of the strata who are interested in maintaining the economic order of a given society. This holds especially for extraordinary and hence revolutionary epochs. A non-plutocratic recruitment of interested politicians, of leadership and following, is geared to the self-understood precondition that regular and reliable income will accrue to those who manage politics.

Either politics can be conducted "honorifically" and then, as one usually says, by "independent," that is, by wealthy, men, and especially by rentiers. Or, political leadership is made accessible to propertyless men who must then be rewarded. The professional politician who lives "off" politics may be a pure "prebendary" or a salaried "official." Then the politician receives either income from fees and perquisites for specific services—tips and bribes are only an irregular and formally illegal variant of this category of income—or a fixed income in kind, a money salary, or both. He may assume the character of an "entrepreneur," like the *condottiere* or the holder of a farmed-out or purchased office, or like the American boss who considers his costs a capital investment which he brings to fruition through exploitation of his influence. Again, he may receive a fixed wage, like a journalist, a party secretary, a modern cabinet minister, or a political official. Feudal fiefs, land grants, and prebends of all

sorts have been typical, in the past. With the development of the money economy, perquisites and prebends especially are the typical rewards for the following of princes, victorious conquerors, or successful party chiefs. For loyal services today, party leaders give offices of all sorts—in parties, newspapers, co-operative societies, health insurance, municipalities, as well as in the state. *All* party struggles are struggles for the patronage of office, as well as struggles for objective goals. . . .

The development of modern officialdom into a highly qualified, professional labor force, specialized in expertness through long years of preparatory training, stands opposed to all these arrangements. Modern bureaucracy in the interest of integrity has developed a high sense of status honor; without this sense the danger of an awful corruption and a vulgar Philistinism threatens fatally. And without such integrity, even the purely technical functions of the state apparatus would be endangered. The significance of the state apparatus for the economy has been steadily rising, especially with increasing socialization, and its significance will be further augmented. . . .

The development of the "leading politicians" was realized along with the ascendancy of the specially trained officialdom, even if in far less noticeable transitions. Of course, such really decisive advisers of the princes have existed at all times and all over the world. In the Orient, the need for relieving the Sultan as far as possible from personal responsibility for the success of the government has created the typical figure of the "Grand Vizier." In the Occident, influenced above all by the reports of the Venetian legates, diplomacy first became a consciously cultivated art in the age of Charles V, in Machiavelli's time. The reports of the Venetian legates were read with passionate zeal in expert diplomatic circles. The adepts of this art, who were in the main educated humanistically, treated one another as trained initiates, similar to the humanist Chinese statesmen in the last period of the warring states. The necessity of a formally unified guidance of the whole policy, including that of home affairs, by a leading statesman finally and compellingly arose only through constitutional development. Of course, individual personalities, such as advisers of the princes, or rather, in fact, leaders, had again and again existed before then. But the organization of administrative agencies even in the most advanced states first proceeded along other avenues. Top collegial administrative agencies had emerged. In theory, and to a gradually decreasing extent in fact, they met under the personal chairmanship of the prince who rendered the decision. This collegial system led to memoranda, counter-memoranda, and reasoned votes of the majority and the minority. In addition to the official and highest authorities, the prince surrounded himself with

purely personal confidants—the “cabinet”—and through them rendered his decisions, after considering the resolutions of the state council, or whatever else the highest state agency was called. The prince, coming more and more into the position of a dilettante, sought to extricate himself from the unavoidably increasing weight of the expertly trained officials through the collegial system and the cabinet. He sought to retain the highest leadership in his own hands. This latent struggle between expert officialdom and autocratic rule existed everywhere. Only in the face of parliaments and the power aspirations of party leaders did the situation change. Very different conditions led to the externally identical result, though to be sure with certain differences. Wherever the dynasties retained actual power in their hands—as was especially the case in Germany—the interests of the prince were joined with those of officialdom *against* parliament and its claims for power. The officials were also interested in having leading positions, that is, ministerial positions, occupied by their own ranks, thus making these positions an object of the official career. The monarch, on his part, was interested in being able to appoint the ministers from the ranks of devoted officials according to his own discretion. Both parties, however, were interested in seeing the political leadership confront parliament in a unified and solidary fashion, and hence in seeing the collegial system replaced by a single cabinet head. Furthermore, in order to be removed in a purely formal way from the struggle of parties and from party attacks, the monarch needed a single personality to cover him and to assume responsibility, that is, to answer to parliament and to negotiate with the parties. All these interests worked together and in the same direction: a minister emerged to direct the officialdom in a unified way.

Where parliament gained supremacy over the monarch—as in England—the development of parliamentary power worked even more strongly in the direction of a unification of the state apparatus. In England, the “cabinet,” with the single head of Parliament as its “leader,” developed as a committee of the party which at the time controlled the majority. This party power was ignored by official law but, in fact, it alone was politically decisive. The official collegial bodies as such were not organs of the actual ruling power, the party, and hence could not be the bearers of real government. The ruling party required an ever-ready organization composed *only* of its actually leading men, who would confidentially discuss matters in order to maintain power within and be capable of engaging in grand politics outside. The cabinet is simply this organization. However, in relation to the public, especially the parliamentary public, the party needed a leader responsible for all decisions—the cabinet

head. The English system has been taken over on the Continent in the form of parliamentary ministries. In America alone, and in the democracies influenced by America, a quite heterogeneous system was placed into opposition with this system. The American system placed the directly and popularly elected leader of the victorious party at the head of the apparatus of officials appointed by him and bound him to the consent of "parliament" only in budgetary and legislative matters.

The development of politics into an organization which demanded training in the struggle for power, and in the methods of this struggle as developed by modern party policies, determined the separation of public functionaries into two categories, which, however, are by no means rigidly but nevertheless distinctly separated. These categories are "administrative" officials on the one hand, and "political" officials on the other. The "political" officials, in the genuine sense of the word, can regularly and externally be recognized by the fact that they can be transferred any time at will, that they can be dismissed, or at least temporarily withdrawn. . . .

After all, things in a private economic enterprise are quite similar: the real "sovereign," the assembled shareholders, is just as little influential in the business management as is a "people" ruled by expert officials. And the personages who decide the policy of the enterprise, the bank-controlled "directorates," give only directive economic orders and select persons for the management without themselves being capable of technically directing the enterprise. . . .

. . . [In] the past "professional politicians" developed through the struggle of the princes with the estates and . . . they served the princes. Let us briefly review the major types of these professional politicians.

Confronting the estates, the prince found support in politically exploitable strata outside of the order of the estates. Among the latter, there was, first, the clergy . . . as in the Christian territories of the Middle Ages. The clergy were technically useful because they were literate. . . . Unlike the vassal who confronted his overlord, the cleric, especially the celibate cleric, stood outside the machinery of normal political and economic interests and was not tempted by the struggle for political power, for himself or for his descendants. By virtue of his own status, the cleric was "separated" from the managerial implements of princely administration.

The humanistically educated literati comprised a second such stratum. There was a time when one learned to produce Latin speeches and Greek verses in order to become a political adviser to a prince and, above all things, to become a memorialist. This was the time of the first flowering of the hu-



manist schools and of the princely foundations of professorships for "poetics." This was for us a transitory epoch, which has had a quite persistent influence upon our educational system, yet no deeper results politically. . . .

The third stratum was the court nobility. After the princes had succeeded in expropriating political power from the nobility as an estate, they drew the nobles to the court and used them in their political and diplomatic service. The transformation of our educational system in the seventeenth century was partly determined by the fact that court nobles as professional politicians displaced the humanist literati and entered the service of the princes.

The fourth category was a specifically English institution. A patrician stratum developed there which was comprised of the petty nobility and the urban rentiers; technically they are called the "gentry." The English gentry represents a stratum that the prince originally attracted in order to counter the barons. The prince placed the stratum in possession of the offices of "self-government," and later he himself became increasingly dependent upon them. The gentry maintained the possession of all offices of local administration by taking them over without compensation in the interest of their own social power. The gentry has saved England from the bureaucratization which has been the fate of all continental states.

A fifth stratum, the university-trained jurist, is peculiar to the Occident, especially to the European continent, and has been of decisive significance for the Continent's whole political structure. The tremendous after-effect of Roman law, as transformed by the late Roman bureaucratic state, stands out in nothing more clearly than the fact that everywhere the revolution of political management in the direction of the evolving rational state has been borne by trained jurists. This also occurred in England, although there the great national guilds of jurists hindered the reception of Roman law. There is no analogy to this process to be found in any area of the world. . . .

Without this juristic rationalism, the rise of the absolute state is just as little imaginable as is the Revolution. If you look through the remonstrances of the French Parliaments or through the *cahiers* of the French Estates-General from the sixteenth century to the year 1789, you will find everywhere the spirit of the jurists. And if you go over the occupational composition of the members of the French Assembly, you will find there—although the members of the Assembly were elected through equal franchise—a single proletarian, very few bourgeois enterprisers, but jurists of all sorts, *en masse*. Without them, the specific mentality that inspired these radical intellectuals and their projects would be quite inconceivable. Since the French Revolution, the modern lawyer and modern democracy absolutely belong together. . . .

The significance of the lawyer in Occidental politics since the rise of parties is not accidental. The management of politics through parties simply means management through interest groups. We shall soon see what that means. The craft of the trained lawyer is to plead effectively the cause of interested clients. . . . Certainly he can advocate and win a cause supported by logically weak arguments and one which, in this sense, is a "weak" cause. Yet he wins it because technically he makes a "strong case" for it. But only the lawyer successfully pleads a cause that can be supported by logically strong arguments, thus handling a "good" cause "well." All too often the civil servant as a politician turns a cause that is good in every sense into a "weak" cause, through technically "weak" pleading. This is what we have had to experience. To an outstanding degree, politics today is in fact conducted in public by means of the spoken or written word. To weigh the effect of the word properly falls within the range of the lawyer's tasks; but not at all into that of the civil servant. The latter is no demagogue, nor is it his purpose to be one. If he nevertheless tries to become a demagogue, he usually becomes a very poor one.

According to his proper vocation, the genuine official . . . will not engage in politics. Rather, he should engage in impartial "administration." This also holds for the so-called "political" administrator, at least officially, in so far as the *raison d'état*, that is, the vital interests of the ruling order, are not in question. *Sine ira et studio*, "without scorn and bias," he shall administer his office. Hence, he shall not do precisely what the politician, the leader as well as his following, must always and necessarily do, namely, *fight*.

To take a stand, to be passionate—*ira et studium*—is the politician's element, and above all the element of the political *leader*. His conduct is subject to quite a different, indeed, exactly the opposite, principle of responsibility from that of the civil servant. The honor of the civil servant is vested in his ability to execute conscientiously the order of the superior authorities, exactly as if the order agreed with his own conviction. This holds even if the order appears wrong to him and if, despite the civil servant's remonstrances, the authority insists on the order. Without this moral discipline and self-denial, in the highest sense, the whole apparatus would fall to pieces. The honor of the political leader, of the leading statesman, however, lies precisely in an exclusive *personal* responsibility for what he does, a responsibility he cannot and must not reject or transfer. It is in the nature of officials of high moral standing to be poor politicians, and above all, in the political sense of the word, to be irresponsible politicians. In this sense, they are politicians of low moral standing, such as we unfortunately have had again and again in leading positions. . . .

Since the time of the constitutional state, and definitely since democracy has been established, the "demagogue" has been the typical political leader in the Occident. The distasteful flavor of the word must not make us forget that not Cleon but Pericles was the first to bear the name of demagogue. In contrast to the offices of ancient democracy that were filled by lot, Pericles led the sovereign *Ecclesia* of the demos of Athens as a supreme strategist holding the only elective office or without holding any office at all. Modern demagoguery also makes use of oratory, even to a tremendous extent, if one considers the election speeches a modern candidate has to deliver. But the use of the printed word is more enduring. The political publicist, and above all the journalist, is nowadays the most important representative of the demagogic species. . . .

### [Part II]

In all political associations which are somehow extensive, that is, associations going beyond the sphere and range of the tasks of small rural districts where power-holders are periodically elected, political organization is necessarily managed by men interested in the management of politics. This is to say that a relatively small number of men are primarily interested in political life and hence interested in sharing political power. They provide themselves with a following through free recruitment, present themselves or their protégés as candidates for election, collect the financial means, and go out for vote-grabbing. It is unimaginable how in large associations elections could function at all without this managerial pattern. In practice this means the division of the citizens with the right to vote into politically active and politically passive elements. This difference is based on voluntary attitudes, hence it cannot be abolished through measures like obligatory voting, or "occupational status group" representation, or similar measures that are expressly or actually directed against this state of affairs and the rule of professional politicians. The active leadership and their freely recruited following are the necessary elements in the life of any party. The following, and through it the passive electorate, are necessary for the election of the leader. But the structure of parties varies. . . .

Parties, in the sense usual with us, were at first, for instance in England, pure followings of the aristocracy. If, for any reason whatever, a peer changed his party, everybody dependent upon him likewise changed. Up to the Reform Bill [of 1832], the great noble families and, last but not least, the king controlled the patronage of an immense number of election boroughs. Close to these aristocratic parties were the parties of notables, which develop every-

where with the rising power of the bourgeois. Under the spiritual leadership of the typical intellectual strata of the Occident, the propertied and cultured circles differentiated themselves into parties and followed them. These parties were formed partly according to class interest, partly according to family traditions, and partly for ideological reasons. Clergymen, teachers, professors, lawyers, doctors, apothecaries, prosperous farmers, manufacturers—in England the whole stratum that considered itself as belonging to the class of gentlemen—formed, at first, occasional associations at most local political clubs. In times of unrest the petty bourgeoisie raised its voice, and once in a while the proletariat, if leaders arose who, however, as a rule did not stem from their midst. In this phase, parties organized as permanent associations between localities do not yet exist in the open country. Only the parliamentary delegates create the cohesion; and the local notables are decisive for the selection of candidates. The election programs originate partly in the election appeals of the candidates and partly in the meetings of the notables; or, they originate as resolutions of the parliamentary party. Leadership of the clubs is an avocation and an honorific pursuit, as demanded by the occasion.

Where clubs are absent (as is mostly the case), the quite formless management of politics in normal times lies in the hands of the few people constantly interested in it. Only the journalist is a paid professional politician; only the management of the newspaper is a continuous political organization. Besides the newspaper, there is only the parliamentary session. The parliamentary delegates and the parliamentary party leaders know to which local notables one turns if a political action seems desirable. But permanent associations of the parties exist only in the large cities with moderate contributions of the members and periodical conferences and public meetings where the delegate gives account of the parliamentary activities. The party is alive only during election periods.

The members of parliament are interested in the possibility of inter-local electoral compromises, in vigorous and unified programs endorsed by broad circles and in a unified agitation throughout the country. In general these interests form the driving force of a party organization which becomes more and more strict. In principle, however, the nature of a party apparatus as an association of notables remains unchanged. This is so, even though a network of local party affiliations and agents is spread over the whole country, including middle-sized cities. A member of the parliamentary party acts as the leader of the central party office and maintains constant correspondence with the local organizations. Outside of the central bureau, paid officials are still absent; thoroughly "respectable" people head the local organizations for the sake of



the deference which they enjoy anyway. They form the extra-parliamentary "notables" who exert influence alongside the stratum of political notables who happen to sit in parliament. However, the party correspondence, edited by the party, increasingly provides intellectual nourishment for the press and for the local meetings. Regular contributions of the members become indispensable; a part of these must cover the expenses of headquarters. . . .

Now then, the most modern forms of party organizations stand in sharp contrast to this idyllic state in which circles of notables and, above all, members of parliament rule. These modern forms are the children of democracy, of mass franchise, of the necessity to woo and organize the masses, and develop the utmost unity of direction and the strictest discipline. The rule of notables and guidance by members of parliament ceases. "Professional" politicians *outside* the parliaments take the organization in hand. They do so either as "entrepreneurs"—the American boss and the English election agent are, in fact, such entrepreneurs—or as officials with a fixed salary. Formally, a fargoing democratization takes place. The parliamentary party no longer creates the authoritative programs, and the local notables no longer decide the selection of candidates. Rather assemblies of the organized party members select the candidates and delegate members to the assemblies of a higher order. Possibly there are several such conventions leading up to the national convention of the party. Naturally power actually rests in the hands of those who, within the organization, handle the work *continuously*. Otherwise, power rests in the hands of those on whom the organization in its processes depends financially or personally—for instance, on the Maccenas or the directors of powerful political clubs of interested persons (Tammany Hall). It is decisive that this whole apparatus of people—characteristically called a "machine" in Anglo-Saxon countries—or rather those who direct the machine, keep the members of the parliament in check. They are in a position to impose their will to a rather far-reaching extent, and that is of special significance for the selection of the party leader. The man whom the machine follows now becomes the leader, even over the head of the parliamentary party. In other words, the creation of such machines signifies the advent of *plebiscitarian* democracy.

The party following, above all the party official and party entrepreneur, naturally expect personal compensation from the victory of their leader—that is, offices or other advantages. It is decisive that they expect such advantages from their leader and not merely from the individual member of parliament. They expect that the demagogic effect of the leader's *personality* during the election fight of the party will increase votes and mandates and thereby power,

and, thereby, as far as possible, will extend opportunities to their followers to find the compensation for which they hope. Ideally, one of their mainsprings is the satisfaction of working with loyal personal devotion for a man, and not merely for an abstract program of a party consisting of mediocrities. In this respect, the "charismatic" element of all leadership is at work in the party system.

In very different degrees this system made headway, although it was in constant, latent struggle with local notables and the members of parliament who wrangled for influence. This was the case in the bourgeois parties . . . in the United States. . . .

According to Washington's idea, America was to be a commonwealth administered by "gentlemen." In his time, in America, a gentleman was also a landlord, or a man with a college education—this was the case at first. In the beginning, when parties began to organize, the members of the House of Representatives claimed to be leaders, just as in England at the time when notables ruled. The party organization was quite loose and continued to be until 1824. . . . But when Andrew Jackson was first elected President—the election of the western farmers' candidate—the old traditions were overthrown. Formal party leadership by leading members of Congress came to an end soon after 1840, when the great parliamentarians, Calhoun and Webster, retired from political life because Congress had lost almost all of its power to the party machine in the open country. That the plebiscitarian "machine" has developed so early in America is due to the fact that there, and there alone, the executive—this is what mattered—the chief of office-patronage, was a President elected by plebiscite. By virtue of the "separation of powers" he was almost independent of parliament in his conduct of office. Hence, as the price of victory, the true booty object of the office-prebend was held out precisely at the presidential election. Through Andrew Jackson the "spoils system" was quite systematically raised to a principle and the conclusions were drawn.

What does this spoils system, the turning over of federal offices to the following of the victorious candidate, mean for the party formations of today? It means that quite unprincipled parties oppose one another; they are purely organizations of job hunters drafting their changing platforms according to the chances of vote-grabbing, changing their colors to a degree which, despite all analogies, is not yet to be found elsewhere. The parties are simply and absolutely fashioned for the election campaign that is most important for office patronage: the fight for the presidency and for the governorships of the separate states. Platforms and candidates are selected at the national conventions of the parties without intervention by congressmen. Hence they emerge from

party conventions, the delegates of which are formally, very democratically elected. These delegates are determined by meetings of other delegates, who, in turn, owe their mandate to the "primaries," the assembling of the direct voters of the party. In the primaries the delegates are already elected in the name of the candidate for the nation's leadership. Within the parties the most embittered fight rages about the question of "nomination." After all, 300,000 to 400,000 official appointments lie in the hands of the President, appointments which are executed by him only with the approval of the senators from the separate states. Hence the senators are powerful politicians. By comparison, however, the House of Representatives is, politically, quite impotent, because patronage of office is removed from it and because the cabinet members, simply assistants to the President, can conduct office apart from the confidence or lack of confidence of the people. The President, who is legitimized by the people, confronts everybody, even Congress; this is a result of "the separation of powers."

In America, the spoils system, supported in this fashion, has been technically possible because American culture with its youth could afford purely dilettante management. With 300,000 to 400,000 such party men who have no qualifications to their credit other than the fact of having performed good services for their party, this state of affairs of course could not exist without enormous evils. A corruption and wastefulness second to none could be tolerated only by a country with as yet unlimited economic opportunities.

Now then, the boss is the figure who appears in the picture of this system of the plebiscitarian party machine. Who is the boss? He is a political capitalist entrepreneur who on his own account and at his own risk provides votes. He may have established his first relations as a lawyer or a saloon-keeper or as a proprietor of similar establishments, or perhaps as a creditor. From here he spins his threads out until he is able to "control" a certain number of votes. When he has come this far he establishes contact with the neighboring bosses, and through zeal, skill, and above all discretion, he attracts the attention of those who have already further advanced in the career, and then he climbs. The boss is indispensable to the organization of the party and the organization is centralized in his hands. He substantially provides the financial means. How does he get them? Well, partly by the contributions of the members, and especially by taxing the salaries of those officials who came into office through him and his party. Furthermore, there are bribes and tips. He who wishes to trespass with impunity one of the many laws needs the boss's connivance and must pay for it; or else he will get into trouble. But this alone is not enough to accumulate the necessary capital for political enterprises. The boss is indis-

pensable as the direct recipient of the money of great financial magnates, who would not entrust their money for election purposes to a paid party official, or to anyone else giving public account of his affairs. The boss, with his judicious discretion in financial matters, is the natural man for those capitalist circles who finance the election. The typical boss is an absolutely sober man. He does not seek social honor; the "professional" is despised in "respectable society." He seeks power alone, power as a source of money, but also power for power's sake. In contrast to the English leader, the American boss works in the dark. He is not heard speaking in public; he suggests to the speakers what they must say in expedient fashion. He himself, however, keeps silent. As a rule he accepts no office, except that of senator. For, since the senators, by virtue of the Constitution, participate in office patronage, the leading bosses often sit in person in this body. The distribution of offices is carried out, in the first place, according to services done for the party. But, also, auctioning offices on financial bids often occurs and there are certain rates for individual offices; hence, a system of selling offices exists which, after all, has often been known also to the monarchies, the church-state included, of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The boss has no firm political "principles"; he is completely unprincipled in attitude and asks merely: What will capture votes? Frequently he is a rather poorly educated man. But as a rule he leads an inoffensive and correct private life. In his political morals, however, he naturally adjusts to the average ethical standards of political conduct. . . . That as a "professional" politician the boss is socially despised does not worry him. That he personally does not attain high federal offices, and does not wish to do so, has the frequent advantage that extra-party intellects, thus notables, may come into candidacy when the bosses believe they will have great appeal value at the polls. Hence the same old party notables do not run again and again, as is the case in Germany. Thus the structure of these unprincipled parties with their socially despised power-holders has aided able men to attain the presidency—men who with us never would have come to the top. To be sure, the bosses resist an outsider who might jeopardize their sources of money and power. Yet in the competitive struggle to win the favor of the voters, the bosses frequently have had to condescend and accept candidates known to be opponents of corruption.

Thus there exists a strong capitalist party machine, strictly and thoroughly organized from top to bottom, and supported by clubs of extraordinary stability. These clubs, such as Tammany Hall, are like Knight orders. They seek profits solely through political control, especially of the municipal government, which is the most important object of booty. This structure of party life was



made possible by the high degree of democracy in the United States—a “New Country.” This connection, in turn, is the basis for the fact that the system is gradually dying out. America can no longer be governed only by dilettantes. Scarcely fifteen years ago, when American workers were asked why they allowed themselves to be governed by politicians whom they admitted they despised, the answer was: “We prefer having people in office whom we can spit upon, rather than a caste of officials who spit upon us, as is the case with you.” This was the old point of view of American “democracy.” Even then, the socialists had entirely different ideas and now the situation is no longer bearable. The dilettante administration does not suffice and the Civil Service Reform establishes an ever-increasing number of positions for life with pension rights. The reform works out in such a way that university-trained officials, just as incorruptible and quite as capable as our officials, get into office. Even now about 100,000 offices have ceased being objects of booty to be turned over after elections. Rather, the offices qualify their holders for pensions, and are based upon tested qualifications. The spoils system will thus gradually recede into the background and the nature of party leadership is then likely to be transformed also—but as yet, we do not know in what way. . . .

Therefore, today, one cannot yet see in any way how the management of politics as a “vocation” will shape itself. Even less can one see along what avenue opportunities are opening to which political talents can be put for satisfactory political tasks. He who by his material circumstances is compelled to live “off” politics will almost always have to consider the alternative positions of the journalist or the party official as the typical direct avenues. Or, he must consider a position as representative of interest groups—such as a trade union, a chamber of commerce, a farm bureau, a craft association, a labor board, an employer’s association, et cetera, or else a suitable municipal position. Nothing more than this can be said about this external aspect: in common with the journalist, the party official bears the odium of being *déclassé*. “Wage writer” or “wage speaker” will unfortunately always resound in his ears, even though the words remain unexpressed. He who is inwardly defenseless and unable to find the proper answer for himself had better stay away from this career. For in any case, besides grave temptations, it is an avenue that may constantly lead to disappointments. Now then, what inner enjoyments can this career offer and what personal conditions are presupposed for one who enters this avenue?

Well, first of all the career of politics grants a feeling of power. The knowledge of influencing men, of participating in power over them, and above all, the feeling of holding in one’s hands a nerve fiber of historically important events can elevate the professional politician above everyday routine even

when he is placed in formally modest positions. But now the question for him is: Through what qualities can I hope to do justice to this power (however narrowly circumscribed it may be in the individual case)? How can he hope to do justice to the responsibility that power imposes upon him? With this we enter the field of ethical questions, for that is where the problem belongs: What kind of a man must one be if he is to be allowed to put his hand on the wheel of history?

One can say that three pre-eminent qualities are decisive for the politician: passion, a feeling of responsibility, and a sense of proportion.

This means passion in the sense of *matter-of-factness*, of passionate devotion to a "cause," to the god or demon who is its overlord. It is not passion in the sense of that inner bearing which my late friend, Georg Simmel, used to designate as "sterile excitation," and which was peculiar especially to a certain type of Russian intellectual (by no means all of them!). . . . It is a "romanticism of the intellectually interesting," running into emptiness devoid of all feeling of objective responsibility.

To be sure, mere passion, however genuinely felt, is not enough. It does not make a politician, unless passion as devotion to a "cause" also makes responsibility to this cause the guiding star of action. And for this, a sense of proportion is needed. This is the decisive psychological quality of the politician: his ability to let realities work upon him with inner concentration and calmness. Hence his *distance* to things and men. "Lack of distance" *per se* is one of the deadly sins of every politician. It is one of those qualities the breeding of which will condemn the progeny of our intellectuals to political incapacity. For the problem is simply how can warm passion and a cool sense of proportion be forged together in one and the same soul? Politics is made with the head, not with other parts of the body or soul. And yet devotion to politics, if it is not to be frivolous intellectual play but rather genuinely human conduct, can be born and nourished from passion alone. However, that firm taming of the soul, which distinguishes the passionate politician and differentiates him from the "sterilely excited" and mere political dilettante, is possible only through habituation to detachment in every sense of the word. The "strength" of a political "personality" means, in the first place, the possession of these qualities of passion, responsibility, and proportion.

Therefore, daily and hourly, the politician inwardly has to overcome a quite trivial and all-too-human enemy: a quite vulgar vanity, the deadly enemy of all matter-of-fact devotion to a cause, and of all distance, in this case, of distance towards one's self.

Vanity is a very widespread quality and perhaps nobody is entirely free from

it. In academic and scholarly circles, vanity is a sort of occupational disease, but precisely with the scholar, vanity—however disagreeably it may express itself—is relatively harmless; in the sense that as a rule it does not disturb scientific enterprise. With the politician the case is quite different. He works with the striving for power as an unavoidable means. Therefore, “power instinct,” as is usually said, belongs indeed to his normal qualities. The sin against the lofty spirit of his vocation, however, begins where this striving for power ceases to be *objective* and becomes purely personal self-intoxication, instead of exclusively entering the service of “the cause.” For ultimately there are only two kinds of deadly sins in the field of politics: lack of objectivity and—often but not always identical with it—irresponsibility. Vanity, the need personally to stand in the foreground as clearly as possible, strongly tempts the politician to commit one or both of these sins. This is more truly the case as the demagogue is compelled to count upon “effect.” He therefore is constantly in danger of becoming an actor as well as taking lightly the responsibility for the outcome of his actions and of being concerned merely with the “impression” he makes. His lack of objectivity tempts him to strive for the glamorous semblance of power rather than for actual power. His irresponsibility, however, suggests that he enjoy power merely for power’s sake without a substantive purpose. Although, or rather just because, power is the unavoidable means, and striving for power is one of the driving forces of all politics, there is no more harmful distortion of political force than the parvenu-like braggart with power, and the vain self-reflection in the feeling of power, and in general every worship of power *per se*. The mere “power politician” may get strong effects, but actually his work leads nowhere and is senseless. (Among us, too, an ardently promoted cult seeks to glorify him.) In this, the critics of “power politics” are absolutely right. From the sudden inner collapse of typical representatives of this mentality, we can see what inner weakness and impotence hides behind this boastful but entirely empty gesture. It is a product of a shoddy and superficially blasé attitude towards the meaning of human conduct; and it has no relation whatsoever to the knowledge of tragedy with which all action, but especially political action, is truly interwoven.

The final result of political action often, no, even regularly, stands in completely inadequate and often even paradoxical relation to its original meaning. This is fundamental to all history, a point not to be proved in detail here. But because of this fact, the serving of a cause must not be absent if action is to have inner strength. Exactly what the cause, in the service of which the politician strives for power and uses power, looks like is a matter of faith. The politician may serve national, humanitarian, social, ethical, cultural, worldly,

or religious ends. The politician may be sustained by a strong belief in "progress"—no matter in which sense—or he may coolly reject this kind of belief. He may claim to stand in the service of an "idea" or, rejecting this in principle, he may want to serve external ends of everyday life. However, some kind of faith must always exist. Otherwise, it is absolutely true that the curse of the creature's worthlessness overshadows even the externally strongest political successes.

### [Part III]

With the statement above we are already engaged in discussing the last problem that concerns us tonight: the *ethos* of politics as a "cause." What calling can politics fulfil quite independently of its goals within the total ethical economy of human conduct—which is, so to speak, the ethical locus where politics is at home? Here, to be sure, ultimate *Weltanschauungen* clash, world views among which in the end one has to make a choice. Let us resolutely tackle this problem, which recently has been opened again, in my view in a very wrong way.

But first, let us free ourselves from a quite trivial falsification: namely, that ethics may first appear in a morally highly compromised role. Let us consider examples. Rarely will you find that a man whose love turns from one woman to another feels no need to legitimate this before himself by saying: she was not worthy of my love, or, she has disappointed me, or whatever other like "reasons" exist. This is an attitude that, with a profound lack of chivalry, adds a fancied "legitimacy" to the plain fact that he no longer loves her and that the woman has to bear it. By virtue of this "legitimation," the man claims a right for himself and besides causing the misfortune seeks to put her in the wrong. The successful amatory competitor proceeds exactly in the same way: namely, the opponent must be less worthy, otherwise he would not have lost out. It is no different, of course, if after a victorious war the victor in undignified self-righteousness claims, "I have won because I was right." Or, if somebody under the frightfulness of war collapses psychologically, and instead of simply saying it was just too much, he feels the need of legitimizing his war weariness to himself by substituting the feeling, "I could not bear it because I had to fight for a morally bad cause." And likewise with the defeated in war. Instead of searching like old women for the "guilty one" after the war—in a situation in which the structure of society produced the war—everyone with a manly and controlled attitude would tell the enemy, "We lost the war. You have won it. That is now all over. Now let us discuss what conclusions must



be drawn according to the *objective* interests that came into play and what is the main thing in view of the responsibility towards the *future* which above all burdens the victor." Anything else is undignified and will become a boomerang. A nation forgives if its interests have been damaged, but no nation forgives if its honor has been offended, especially by a bigoted self-righteousness. Every new document that comes to light after decades revives the undignified lamentations, the hatred and scorn, instead of allowing the war at its end to be buried, at least morally. This is possible only through objectivity and chivalry and above all only through dignity. But never is it possible through an "ethic," which in truth signifies a lack of dignity on both sides. Instead of being concerned about what the politician is interested in, the future and the responsibility towards the future, this ethic is concerned about politically sterile questions of past guilt, which are not to be settled politically. To act in this way is politically guilty, if such guilt exists at all. And it overlooks the unavoidable falsification of the whole problem, through very material interests: namely, the victor's interest in the greatest possible moral and material gain; the hopes of the defeated to trade in advantages through confessions of guilt. If anything is "vulgar," then, this is, and it is the result of this fashion of exploiting "ethics" as a means of "being in the right."

Now then, what relations do ethics and politics actually have? Have the two nothing whatever to do with one another, as has occasionally been said? Or, is the reverse true: that the ethic of political conduct is identical with that of any other conduct? Occasionally an exclusive choice has been believed to exist between the two propositions—either the one or the other proposition must be correct. But is it true that any ethic of the world could establish commandments of identical content for erotic, business, familial, and official relations; for the relations to one's wife, to the greengrocer, the son, the competitor, the friend, the defendant? Should it really matter so little for the ethical demands on politics that politics operates with very special means, namely, power backed up by *violence*? Do we not see that the Bolshevik . . . ideologists bring about exactly the same results as any militaristic dictator just because they use this political means? In what but the persons of the power-holders and their dilettantism does the rule of the workers' and soldiers' councils differ from the rule of any power-holder of the old regime? In what way does the polemic of most representatives of the presumably new ethic differ from that of the opponents which they criticized, or the ethic of any other demagogues? In their noble intention, people will say, Good! But it is the means about which we speak here, and the adversaries, in complete subjective sincerity, claim, in the very same way, that their ultimate intentions are of lofty character. "All

they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" and fighting is everywhere fighting. Hence, the ethic of the Sermon on the Mount.

By the Sermon on the Mount, we mean the absolute ethic of the gospel, which is a more serious matter than those who are fond of quoting these commandments today believe. This ethic is no joking matter. The same holds for this ethic as has been said of causality in science: it is not a cab, which one can have stopped at one's pleasure; it is all or nothing. This is precisely the meaning of the gospel, if trivialities are not to result. Hence, for instance, it was said of the wealthy young man, "He went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions." The evangelist commandment, however, is unconditional and unambiguous: give what thou hast—absolutely everything. The politician will say that this is a socially senseless imposition as long as it is not carried out everywhere. Thus the politician upholds taxation, confiscatory taxation, outright confiscation; in a word, compulsion and regulation for all. The ethical commandment, however, is not at all concerned about that, and this concern is its essence. Or, take the example, "turn the other cheek": This command is unconditional and does not question the source of the other's authority to strike. Except for a saint it is an ethic of indignity. This is it: one must be saintly in everything; at least in intention, one must live like Jesus, the apostles, St. Francis, and their like. *Then* this ethic makes sense and expresses a kind of dignity; otherwise it does not. For if it is said, in line with the acosmic ethic of love, "Resist not him that is evil with force," for the politician the reverse proposition holds, "thou *shalt* resist evil by force," or else you are responsible for the evil winning out. He who wishes to follow the ethic of the gospel should abstain from strikes, for strikes mean compulsion; he may join the company unions. Above all things, he should not talk of "revolution." After all, the ethic of the gospel does not wish to teach that civil war is the only legitimate war. The pacifist who follows the gospel will refuse to bear arms or will throw them down; in Germany this was the recommended ethical duty to end the war and therewith all wars. The politician would say the only sure means to discredit the war for all foreseeable time would have been a *status quo* peace. Then the nations would have questioned, what was this war for? And then the war would have been argued *ad absurdum*, which is now impossible. For the victors, at least for part of them, the war will have been politically profitable. And the responsibility for this rests on behavior that made all resistance impossible for us. Now, as a result of the ethics of absolutism, when the period of exhaustion will have passed, *the peace will be discredited, not the war.*

Finally, let us consider the duty of truthfulness. For the absolute ethic it

holds unconditionally. Hence the conclusion was reached to publish all documents, especially those placing blame on one's own country. On the basis of these one-sided publications the confessions of guilt followed—and they were one-sided, unconditional, and without regard to consequences. The politician will find that as a result truth will not be furthered but certainly obscured through abuse and unleashing of passion; only an all-round methodical investigation by non-partisans could bear fruit; any other procedure may have consequences for a nation that cannot be remedied for decades. But the absolute ethic just does not *ask* for "consequences." That is the decisive point.

We must be clear about the fact that all ethically oriented conduct may be guided by one of two fundamentally differing and irreconcilably opposed maxims: conduct can be oriented to an "ethic of ultimate ends" or to an "ethic of responsibility." This is not to say that an ethic of ultimate ends is identical with irresponsibility, or that an ethic of responsibility is identical with unprincipled opportunism. Naturally nobody says that. However, there is an abysmal contrast between conduct that follows the maxim of an ethic of ultimate ends—that is, in religious terms, "The Christian does rightly and leaves the results with the Lord"—and conduct that follows the maxim of an ethic of responsibility, in which case one has to give an account of the foreseeable results of one's action.

You may demonstrate to a convinced syndicalist, believing in an ethic of ultimate ends, that his action will result in increasing the opportunities of reaction, in increasing the oppression of his class, and obstructing its ascent—and you will not make the slightest impression upon him. If an action of good intent leads to bad results, then, in the actor's eyes, not he but the world, or the stupidity of other men, or God's will who made them thus, is responsible for the evil. However a man who believes in an ethic of responsibility takes account of precisely the average deficiencies of people; as Fichte has correctly said, he does not even have the right to presuppose their goodness and perfection. He does not feel in a position to burden others with the results of his own actions so far as he was able to foresee them; he will say: these results are ascribed to my action. The believer in an ethic of ultimate ends feels "responsible" only for seeing to it that the flame of pure intentions is not quenched; for example, the flame of protesting against the injustice of the social order. To rekindle the flame ever anew is the purpose of his quite irrational deeds, judged in view of their possible success. They are acts that can and shall have only exemplary value.

But even herewith the problem is not yet exhausted. No ethics in the world can dodge the fact that in numerous instances the attainment of "good" ends

is bound to the fact that one must be willing to pay the price of using morally dubious means or at least dangerous ones—and facing the possibility or even the probability of evil ramifications. From no ethics in the world can it be concluded when and to what extent the ethically good purpose “justifies” the ethically dangerous means and ramifications.

The decisive means for politics is violence. You may see the extent of the tension between means and ends, when viewed ethically, from the following: as is generally known, even during the war the revolutionary socialists . . . professed a principle that one might strikingly formulate: “If we face the choice either of some more years of war and then revolution, or peace now and no revolution, we choose—some more years of war!” Upon the further question: “What can this revolution bring about?” every scientifically trained socialist would have had the answer: One cannot speak of a transition to an economy that in our sense could be called socialist; a bourgeois economy will re-emerge, merely stripped of the feudal elements and the dynastic vestiges. For this very modest result, they are willing to face “some more years of war.” One may well say that even with a very robust socialist conviction one might reject a purpose that demands such means. With Bolshevism . . . and, in general, with any kind of revolutionary socialism, it is precisely the same thing. It is of course utterly ridiculous if the power politicians of the old regime are morally denounced for their use of the same means, however justified the rejection of their *aims* may be.

The ethic of ultimate ends apparently must go to pieces on the problem of the justification of means by ends. As a matter of fact, logically it has only the possibility of rejecting all action that employs morally dangerous means—in theory! In the world of realities, as a rule, we encounter the ever-renewed experience that the adherent of an ethic of ultimate ends suddenly turns into a chiliastic prophet. Those, for example, who have just preached “love against violence” now call for the use of force for the *last* violent deed, which would then lead to a state of affairs in which *all* violence is annihilated. In the same manner, our officers told the soldiers before every offensive: “This will be the last one; this one will bring victory and therewith peace.” The proponent of an ethic of absolute ends cannot stand up under the ethical irrationality of the world. He is a cosmic-ethical “rationalist.” Those of you who know Dostoevski will remember the scene of the “Grand Inquisitor,” where the problem is poignantly unfolded. If one makes any concessions at all to the principle that the ends justifies the means, it is not possible to bring an ethic of ultimate ends and an ethic of responsibility under one roof or to decree ethically which end should justify which means. . . .



Whosoever contracts with violent means for whatever ends—and every politician does—is exposed to its specific consequences. This holds especially for the crusader, religious and revolutionary alike. Let us confidently take the present as an example. He who wants to establish absolute justice on earth by force requires a following, a human “machine.” He must hold out the necessary internal and external premiums, heavenly or worldly reward, to this “machine” or else the machine will not function. Under the conditions of the modern class struggle, the internal premiums consist of the satisfying of hatred and the craving for revenge; above all, resentment and the need for pseudo-ethical self-righteousness: the opponents must be slandered and accused of heresy. The external rewards are adventure, victory, booty, power, and spoils. The leader and his success are completely dependent upon the functioning of his machine and hence not on his own motives. Therefore he also depends upon whether or not the premiums can be *permanently* granted to the following, that is, to the Red Guard, the informers, the agitators, whom he needs. What he actually attains under the conditions of his work is therefore not in his hand, but is prescribed to him by the following, motives, which, if viewed ethically, are predominantly base. The following can be harnessed only so long as an honest belief in his person and his cause inspires at least part of the following, probably never on earth even the majority. This belief, even when subjectively sincere, is in a very great number of cases really no more than an ethical “legitimation” of cravings for revenge, power, booty, and spoils. We shall not be deceived about this by verbiage; the materialist interpretation of history is no cab to be taken at will; it does not stop short of the promoters of revolutions. Emotional revolutionism is followed by the traditionalist routine of everyday life; the crusading leader and the faith itself fade away, or, what is even more effective, the faith becomes part of the conventional phraseology of political Philistines and banausic technicians. This development is especially rapid with struggles of faith because they are usually led or inspired by genuine leaders, that is, prophets of revolution. For here, as with every leader’s machine, one of the conditions for success is the depersonalization and routinization, in short, the psychic proletarianization, in the interests of discipline. After coming to power the following of a crusader usually degenerates very easily into a quite common stratum of spoilsmen.

Whoever wants to engage in politics at all, and especially in politics as a vocation, has to realize these ethical paradoxes. He must know that he is responsible for what may become of himself under the impact of these paradoxes. I repeat, he lets himself in for the diabolic forces lurking in all violence. The great *virtuosi* of acosmic love of humanity and goodness, whether stem-

ming from Nazareth or Assisi or from Indian royal castles, have not operated with the political means of violence. Their kingdom was "not of this world" and yet they worked and still work in this world. The figures of Platon Karatajev and the saints of Dostoievski still remain their most adequate reconstructions. He who seeks the salvation of the soul, of his own and of others, should not seek it along the avenue of politics, for the quite different tasks of politics can only be solved by violence. The genius or demon of politics lives in an inner tension with the god of love, as well as with the Christian God as expressed by the church. This tension can at any time lead to an irreconcilable conflict. Men knew this even in the times of church rule. Time and again the papal interdict was placed upon Florence and at the time it meant a far more robust power for men and their salvation of soul than (to speak with Fichte) the "cool approbation" of the Kantian ethical judgment. The burghers, however, fought the church-state. And it is with reference to such situations that Machiavelli in a beautiful passage, if I am not mistaken, of the *History of Florence*, has one of his heroes praise those citizens who deemed the greatness of their native city higher than the salvation of their souls. . . .

Surely, politics is made with the head, but it is certainly not made with the head alone. In this the proponents of an ethic of ultimate ends are right. One cannot prescribe to anyone whether he should follow an ethic of absolute ends or an ethic of responsibility, or when the one and when the other. One can say only this much: If in these times, which, in your opinion, are not times of "sterile" excitation—excitation is not, after all, genuine passion—if now suddenly the *Weltanschauungs*-politicians crop up *en masse* and pass the watchword, "The world is stupid and base, not I," "The responsibility for the consequences does not fall upon me but upon the others whom I serve and whose stupidity or baseness I shall eradicate," then I declare frankly that I would first inquire into the degree of inner poise backing this ethic of ultimate ends. I am under the impression that in nine out of ten cases I deal with windbags who do not fully realize what they take upon themselves but who intoxicate themselves with romantic sensations. From a human point of view this is not very interesting to me, nor does it move me profoundly. However, it is immensely moving when a *mature* man—no matter whether old or young in years—is aware of a responsibility for the consequences of his conduct and really feels such responsibility with heart and soul. He then acts by following an ethic of responsibility and somewhere he reaches the point where he says: "Here I stand; I can do no other." That is something genuinely human and moving. And every one of us who is not spiritually dead must realize the possibility of finding himself at some time in that position. In so far as this is true, an ethic

of ultimate ends and an ethic of responsibility are not absolute contrasts but rather supplements, which only in unison constitute a genuine man—a man who *can* have the “calling for politics.” . . .

Politics is a strong and slow boring of hard boards. It takes both passion and perspective. Certainly all historical experience confirms the truth—that man would not have attained the possible unless time and again he had reached out for the impossible. But to do that a man must be a leader, and not only a leader but a hero as well, in a very sober sense of the word. And even those who are neither leaders nor heroes must arm themselves with that steadfastness of heart which can brave even the crumbling of all hopes. This is necessary right now, or else men will not be able to attain even that which is possible today. Only he has the calling for politics who is sure that he shall not crumble when the world from his point of view is too stupid or too base for what he wants to offer. Only he who in the face of all this can say “In spite of all!” has the calling for politics.

## FRANZ L. NEUMANN

FOR Franz L. Neumann (1900-1954) the hopes and disappointments of democracy after World War I were a lived experience. A student at Frankfurt University at the end of the war, he joined the Social Democratic Party as the one political movement which was completely committed to democracy in Germany. As a professional lawyer he was an attorney for the democratic labor unions, and at the same time he gave occasional courses in political science at the liberally oriented *Hochschule für Politik* in Berlin. As a militant foe of reaction he was marked for liquidation by the Nazis and escaped from Germany almost literally in the nick of time. In England he began a new career as an academician at the London School of Economics, from which he received a doctorate in 1936. Migrating to the United States, he became an adviser to the Office of Strategic Services during World War II. He returned to the academic world as a professor of public law and government at Columbia University. His activity as a teacher reflected his conviction that the intellectual had a special obligation to expose the political choices presented by the contemporary situation and to clarify for his fellow men the consequences of these choices for human freedom.

Neumann's profound commitment to democracy did not blind him to its failures. In his view the two most significant events of the twentieth century were the Bolshevik Revolution and fascism. The first, he pointed out, had accomplished through dictatorship a social revolution which democracy had been unable, and increasingly unwilling, to execute. The implications of the second were thoroughly analyzed in his *Behemoth; the Structure and Practice of National Socialism* (1942), in which Neumann showed that fascism destroys not only social progress and democratic controls of power but the very rationality of political forms. The chaotic terror of fascism, the Behemoth or non-state, was traced to social and political trends developing in free societies. The tragedy of fascism thus demonstrated the growing inability of democracy even to fight for the preservation of its gains.

Neumann refused to gloss over these facts as temporary "aberrations" in the automatic progress of democracy. He was always too tough a realist, too knowledgeable a student of history, to take refuge in a shallow optimism. For him, indeed, the first obligation of the political theorist was to recognize the realities of power. And he felt that the threat to democracy in our times required a rethinking of all traditional assumptions as to the relation between power and freedom. The present selection is the first of three articles which Neumann devoted to a provisional formulation of this problem. The "Approaches to the Study of Political Power" was followed by "The Concept of Political Freedom" and "Anxiety in Politics." The unifying aim was to expose the changing function of power in modern society, its ever-expanding role, and the ideological forms in which it is disguised; to restate the ways in which man seeks to resist and get control of power in order to realize his freedom; and to investigate the mechanisms which



cause man to react irrationally to political alienation and to be transformed from a rational subject into a mere object of domination by the manipulation of his uncontrolled anxieties. These studies were meant to be provisional, and a fourth article was projected to state the whole problem of freedom and power. But the rest remains unfinished. Franz L. Neumann was killed in an automobile accident in Switzerland in September, 1954. His untimely death was a tragedy to partisans of the intellect everywhere.

The following selection, "Approaches to the Study of Political Power," first appeared in the *Political Science Quarterly* (1950).



### APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF POLITICAL POWER

It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to add any new idea to a discussion of political power. To be sure, there are few books so named; but almost everything written in the field of the political sciences deals in one way or another with the subject. The purpose of this essay is not to develop a new theory of political power but rather to lay bare the approaches to its study, particularly for younger students.

#### I. POLITICAL POWER AND PSYCHOLOGY

Political power is an elusive concept. It embraces two radically different relations: control of nature, and control of man. Power over nature is mere intellectual power. It consists in man's understanding of the lawfulness of external nature for the ultimate purpose of subjecting external nature to man's needs. It is this accumulated knowledge which is the basis of the productivity of any given society. This power is powerless. It does not involve control of other men.

Political power is social power focused on the state. It involves control of other men for the purpose of influencing the behavior of the state, its legislative, administrative and judicial activities. Since political power is control of other men, political power (as contrasted with power over external nature) is always a two-sided relationship. Man is not simply a piece of external nature; he is an organism endowed with reason, although frequently not capable of, or prevented from, acting rationally. Consequently, those who wield political power are compelled to create emotional and rational re-

---

This selection has been reprinted from Franz Neumann, "Approaches to the Study of Political Power," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. LXV, No. 2 (June, 1950), pp. 161-180 by permission of the publisher.

sponses in those whom they rule, inducing them to accept, implicitly or explicitly, the commands of the rulers. Failure to evoke emotional or intellectual responses in the ruled compels the ruler to resort to simple violence, ultimately to liquidation.

The two-sided character of political power already marks political science off from natural science. It makes it impossible (even if it were desirable) to measure power relationships as one measures the behavior of external nature. The variations of the power relationships are numberless. One may classify and describe them, but one cannot measure them.

Political power is not comparable to the category of energy in physics. Nor is power the sole category of political science. Politics is not merely the art of getting something in a certain way regardless of the what and of the how. The trend to equate politics with power politics goes back to Machiavelli and appears to have become the predominant trait of American and, perhaps, of modern political science in general. Politics is viewed as a purely technical concern. "Values" (the term is used only provisionally) are then mere personal preferences; valid if they work, invalid if they fail. History is then quite meaningless. It is an indifferent repetition of the endless struggle of "in-groups" versus "out-groups." It is thus reduced to mere chronology, a file of illustrative materials for so-called hypotheses or, at best, is governed by what Machiavelli called *Fortuna*, the luck of the participants in the struggle.

The theoretical basis of this approach to politics and political science is usually psychological, as Machiavelli has already developed it. Men are the same throughout history. They have certain stable traits, and all, or almost all, are equipped with "power drive," an uncontrollable and irrational impulse for power. From this assertion are then derived such facile half-true generalizations as the famous statement of Lord Acton: "Power tends to corrupt, absolute power corrupts absolutely."

This is not to imply that the psychology of power has no place in political science. Its significance is great, but not decisive. Its contribution is twofold. First, it leads to the realization that the optimistic theories of human nature are one-sided and thus false. Man, although endowed with reason, frequently knows not—or is not permitted to know—what his true interests are. This rediscovery of ancient truths is particularly the merit of the materialistic psychology of Freud. Secondly, psychological techniques permit us to describe in concrete and convincing terms the personality structures most capable of exerting or of suffering power. But psychology cannot go beyond concretization and description. It cannot supply a theory of political power. The action

of each man is as much the result of the environment as it is the manifestation of a personality structure. Indeed, personality itself is historically conditioned. To the psychologist, the environment is a mere "stimulus" of the individual act. To the political scientist, it is the one element in the total setting of political power.

The present orientation of psychology, besides, tends to make it simply a technique of rule, of maintaining and strengthening power relationships, an instrument of manipulation of the masses by the élite.

The rejection of the psychological approach involves in its positive aspect the view that politics (and thus history) is not simply a struggle of power groups for power, but an attempt to mold the world according to one's image, to impress one's view upon it. The historical process has a meaning. Provisionally, we may accept the traditional pre-positivistic formulation that politics is the struggle of ideas as well as of force.

## II. ATTITUDES TOWARD POWER

Consciously, or unconsciously, every student of politics has a specific attitude toward political power. It is this attitude which determines one's approach to all problems of political science. The valuative premises must be made clear so that objective analyses may be possible. The soul searching of the political scientist may be facilitated by a classification of the various attitudes exhibited in the history of political theory. The classification presented here is only suggested and is not meant to imply that there are no better and more convincing classifications.

1. For Plato and Aristotle, political power is more than a separate function of the organized community. It *is* the community. Political power is the total power of the community, distinguished from other relationships merely by its techniques. There is, in this view, no distinction between state and society, economics and politics, morals and politics, religion and politics, culture and politics. Man and citizen are equated. Every activity of the community and of its citizens is political. Only through political action can the citizen attain his fulfillment; only through politics does he become man.

2. To this, there is radically opposed what I shall call the Augustinian position. Politics is evil; political power is coercion, evil in origin and purpose. It is "unnatural" that man rule over man. Only at the end of history with the advent of the Kingdom of God can and will coercion be dispensed with. From this philosophy derive two radically different, and yet inherently related, attitudes: that of total conformism and that of total opposition to

political power. If politics is evil, withdrawal is mandatory. Forms of government and objectives of political power become irrelevant. Salvation can be attained through faith, and the earthly life should be a mere preparation for it. Monasticism is the first consequence. By the same token, however, the demand for the immediate destruction of politics and the establishment of a Kingdom of God may equally be supported by the Augustinian premise. The Anabaptist movement was perhaps the most striking manifestation of the total rejection of society.

3. The radicalism of St. Augustine is, of course, "impractical." St. Thomas introduces what may be called a commonsense attitude toward political power. Power is not unnatural since hierarchic relationships already existed among the angels. Yet the attitude toward political power is not unambiguously positive. It is not only hedged in by many restraints but also, in some rather unclear way, subordinated to spiritual power operating indirectly through various levels of law.

4. It is this climate which prepared the way for the liberal attitude. Its sole concern is the erection of fences around political power which is, allegedly, distrusted. Its aim is the dissolution of power into legal relationships, the elimination of the element of personal rule, and the substitution of the rule of law in which all relationships are to become purposive-rational, that is, predictable and calculable. In reality, of course, this is in large measure an ideology tending (often unintentionally) to prevent the search for the locus of political power and to render more secure its actual holders. Power cannot be dissolved in law.<sup>1</sup>

5. Not to be confused with liberalism is the Epicurean attitude toward politics. In contrast to the Platonic-Aristotelian conception, politics is a separate business of society, clearly distinguished and distinguishable from all other activities. But it is a complete matter of indifference how it is organized, who exerts it, for what purposes it is used. Any power is justified which maintains that minimum external order of society which permits the individual to go on with his life.

6. In its psychological consequence, Epicureanism is sometimes closely related to the anarchistic approach. To the anarchist, political power is evil, society good, hence it is possible to organize a society without politics. As

<sup>1</sup> "Although the laws be never more than mere declarations of anterior rights, nevertheless it is of utmost importance that all is written which can be written: indeed, in every constitution there is always something which cannot be written down, and which must be left in a dark and venerable cloud under pain of overthrowing the state." Joseph de Maistre, *Considérations sur la France*, ch. vi.



in Augustinism, conformism or putschism may follow. Conformism: one should not dirty one's hands by participation in politics; putschism: one can establish an associative society at any time that man wills it.

7. Marxism shares with anarchism and Augustinism the belief that political power is not a natural but an historical phenomenon. In contrast to anarchism, and with Augustinism, however, it believes it to be a necessary historical phenomenon, but the necessity is limited (in contrast to Augustinism) to one historical phase through which mankind must pass before the classless society (a society without politics) can be established. The remedy against political power (again against the anarchists) is more and highly concentrated political power, skillfully used to smash political power (dictatorship of the proletariat). The Marxist thus has a positive approach to political power up to the establishment of a classless society.

8. Marx shares this positive approach with Rousseau. For the latter, political power is at once comprehensive and non-existent. It is all-encompassing because the organized community (as in Plato and Aristotle) embraces all activities of man, culture, economics, religion; nonexistent because of the alleged identity of rulers and ruled in the general will. It is precisely this dual attitude toward political power which makes Robespierre's theory and actions understandable.

9. The liberal democrat shares with the total democrat a positive attitude toward political power which appears essentially as a rational instrument to be used for desired and desirable ends. Yet the fear of the liberal prevents him from accepting the total politicizing of life and causes him to insist on the separate character of political power. But the consistent liberal democrat is not, and cannot be, solely concerned with the erection of fences around political power. He is increasingly concerned with the potentialities of a rational use of political power.

This (or any other) typology of the attitudes toward political power enables us to discover contradictory statements often of a hypocritical or demagogic nature and to arrive at a consistent approach to the study of the power phenomenon. If a scholar or politician demands, in the same breath, the exclusion of dissenters from political participation and the inviolability of private property from governmental intrusion, we have before us a mixture of two attitudes: that of Plato-Rousseau, and that of liberalism.

The result is not a "new" attitude toward power but a propagandistic statement. Our typology of attitudes readily reveals that it contains contradictory positions. It is the duty of the critical student to remove such inconsistencies from his own thinking, to expose them when they appear in the

statements of others, and to become aware of the premises of his own position.

### III. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF POLITICAL POWER

Once this self-examination is completed, the significance of political power should be squarely faced. No society in recorded history has ever been able to dispense with political power. This is as true of liberalism as of absolutism, as true of laissez faire as of an interventionist state. No greater disservice has been rendered to political science than the statement that the liberal state was a "weak" state. It was precisely as strong as it needed to be in the circumstances. It acquired substantial colonial empires, waged wars, held down internal disorders, and stabilized itself over long periods of time.

But the methods applied by those who wield power and the scope of its application vary, of course. And it is precisely this problem that is of major significance for the political scientist. Formally, the methods range from the marginal case of killing to the marginal case of education. Three basic methods are at the disposal of the power group: persuasion, material benefits, violence. Violence is probably most effective as a short-range method, but little effective as the principal method of maintaining power over long periods since it compels the group (particularly under modern conditions) to intensify the methods of violence and to extend it to larger sections of the ruled. The most efficient (that is, cheapest form) is, of course, persuasion. Yet all three, persuasion, benefits, violence, are always present in all forms of government. And it is precisely the mixture of the three elements which constitutes another major problem for the political scientist. I shall attempt to clarify the meaning by the formulation of some sociological generalizations.

#### *Sociological Generalization 1*

The significance of persuasion grows with the growing complexity of society. It is, perhaps, legitimate to consider persuasion, as a rule, to be merely a form of violence, "violence committed against the soul" as the French historian of Catholic England under Henry VIII formulated it. Through persuasion, the rulers achieve a marked degree of habituation of the ruled so that their reactions assume an almost automatic character. The success of persuasion will, however, depend upon the scope and duration of the propaganda and the skills by which stereotypes are produced. There is little doubt that persuasion is a more efficient and cheaper exercise of political power than the employment of large police forces, armies and militias.

*Sociological Generalization 2*

The increasing complexity of society requires that the rulers increasingly utilize arcana, secret techniques of rule. The struggle for power is a real struggle aiming at the control of the state machine. In any struggle, however, tactical decisions can be effectively made only in secret. Secrecy, in turn, can be preserved only by small numbers. It is this very fact that necessitates the rise of oligarchies within mass movements. Max Weber and Robert Michels (and probably many others) have drawn attention to this phenomenon, and Max Weber, besides, correctly stressed the superiority of small over large numbers because of the significance of secrecy for any rule designed to be more than temporary. It is precisely for this reason that the rule of the few becomes particularly marked in those mass organizations which, more than other movements, are essentially devoted to democracy: the trade unions and the social democratic (labor) parties. The reason is obvious. The opponents of these movements are usually numerically few, but individually powerful, subjects who are thus able to keep their strategic and tactical decisions secret. The mass organization, faced with such opposition, must, in turn, resort to the construction of forms of rule which also permit secrecy. Aristocratic rule thus becomes a sociologically necessary implementation of democratic movements. It is, therefore, no accident that the growth of oligarchies within mass movements was first studied in the example of the German Social Democratic party.

Lenin made a virtue of this necessity. His vanguard theory of leadership frankly replaces the traditional democratic conception of social democracy by an aristocratic one.

*Sociological Generalization 3*

The higher the state of technological development, the greater the concentration of political power. The legal conception of ownership is quite irrelevant for an analysis of this phenomenon. It matters not who owns a technical unit: an individual, a corporation, a state, any other organized society. The social organization of large technical units may, of course, be a coöperative one. In every social group which is based on struggle, however, the organization will, of necessity, be hierarchic. The larger the size, the more hierarchic it becomes. Growing hierarchic trends lead to concentration of power at the top. The relation between social and political power will be analyzed at a later place.

*Sociological Generalization 4*

With the growing complexity of society and its increasing industrialization, the significance of political power in the social process grows. Concentration of power (in the economy, in society, in culture) makes for more rigidity. A process of social petrification sets in and prevents the system from achieving a semiautomatic balance. The equilibrium, once disturbed, can be restored only through active intervention of the political power. Control of the state then becomes more precious than ever before.

*Sociological Generalization 5*

The same trend also produces a greater separation of political power from social power—a phenomenon that shall concern us later.

Some or all of these generalizations are subject to challenge. They are not meant to be exhaustive, but merely point the direction to a proper study of political power. That they produce uneasiness is to be expected. At first sight it seems difficult to reconcile them with the theory of democracy. If by democracy is understood that mixture of diverse elements, of Locke and Rousseau, St. Augustine and St. Thomas, which is usually called "democratic theory," a reconciliation of those realistic trends with the doctrine is, indeed, impossible. We are not now concerned with the problem of democratic theory. For the present it suffices to say that an adequate democratic theory will have to deal with these problems.

## IV. ROOTS OF POLITICAL POWER

Three questions have to be faced in the analysis of the roots of political power: the conceptual framework has to be established; the institutional setting to be clarified; and the historical process to be understood which leads to a change in institutions and different attitudes toward power and to a different political behavior. For the ancient historians, this was no problem. Political power derived squarely from economic power, particularly from the control of land. Changes in ownership, the emergence of new modes of production, and so on, created new sources of political power and thus made for conflicts. Modern historians dealing with this period of history have not hesitated to restate the problem in the same way as the ancients stated it.

As we shall directly show, modern capitalist economy has rendered this whole subject problematical. And, despite the fact that the issue is so crucial, analysis has been hindered by senseless taboos. The older insights have been



lost or hidden and are rarely brought fully into the open. Thus, the classical approach has been restated in modern time by Marx's interpretation of history (that this did not originate with him—and is not "Marxist"—he himself admitted). Yet since it is fashionable to reject Marxism root and branch—sight unseen so to speak—the student precludes himself from a clear understanding of the relationship between economic power and political power.

The approach is facilitated by the establishment of certain categories of relationships.

1. The ancient conception. Here—and this follows already from what has been said—although the source of political power is economic power, political power permeates all social activities and all spheres of life. The economic power position merely provides the motor of political power which then includes all power relationships.

2. The feudal conception. In the ideal-typical form, political power does not exist. It is merely a function of an economic power position: the ownership of land. From it flow judicial, military, religious, legislative and administrative powers.

3. The capitalist conception. It is only in this period that a real problem arises: the independence of political power and yet its interconnection with economic power. Political power (the theoretical construction has been perfected by Hobbes) is a separate activity, carried out in a separate institution: the state. The state has the monopoly of coercive power which it exercises in a separate institutional framework. At the same time, however, this separate institution is intrinsically connected with society in the service of which it operates. It is this conception of political power that unites Locke and Hobbes, and distinguishes both from Rousseau. Both separate political power from social power; both connects them. Hobbes believes it necessary to maximize political power in order to serve society; Locke maintains that only by its minimization can society be served. Both, however, admit of exceptions. In Hobbes's theory, political power will be destroyed if it fails to serve its social function (the social contract lapses); Locke, through the institution of the prerogative and federative power, maximizes political power if it is necessary for the good of the commonwealth. What Hobbes and Locke did not clearly state is that the two are not only functionally but genetically connected; that is, economic power is the root of political power. The first systematic analysis of this relationship stems from St. Simon's analysis of the French Revolution and then spreads rapidly into French and English historiography and sociology.

From this general view of Hobbes and Locke it follows that whatever free-

dom society, and particularly economic activity, is to have, it has for the sake of maintaining a stable political order. There is thus no "pure" economic power and no "pure" political activity. Economics is as much an instrument of politics as politics is a tool of economics. The mythological conception of the laissez-faire state ought finally to be destroyed.

If this general view is accepted, the translation of economic power into social power and thence into political power becomes the crucial concern of the political scientist.

### *The Political Party*

The single most important instrument for the translation of social power into political power is the political party. The reason for the supreme position of the party lies in the very nature of democracy. The party permits the presentation of particular and, quite frequently, very egoistic interest as national interests. At the same time, however, it prevents the total domination of national interests by particular interests. The function of the political party in democracy is thus ambiguous. The democratic process compels each social group to strive for mass support. Each group, therefore, must present its egoistic interests as universal. Politics in a democracy, the struggle for political power, thus becomes far more ideological than in any previous period in history. What was obvious for the ancients, and clear to the feudal system, becomes hidden in the democratic process. But the valuable side of this process must equally not be forgotten. The very need to appeal to social groups larger than the immediate interest group compels adjustments of various interests. Politics becomes more democratic.

### *Private Property*

Social power, in turn, either is derived from private property or is against it. The legal meaning of private property comprises two radically different conceptions: power over an external piece of nature (or an absolute right) and power over other men derived from power over nature. It is only the second meaning of private property with which the political scientist is concerned: with proprietorship in the means of production. This type of property gives power—power in the labor market, in the commodity market, and in the political market of the state.

The three power functions of property are usually (and particularly in Europe where political and social life is more petrified than in the United States) institutionalized in three types of organization: for the labor market, the employer's association; for the commodity market, the cartel; for the

political market, the territorial form of the chambers of commerce and the functional form of the trade associations.

As against property, the trade unions (in Europe) attempt to organize the labor markets and the political markets by the collective power of organized labor, sometimes in one organization, sometimes in several. Consumers' and producers' cooperatives, however, affect only slightly the power of property in the commodity market.

Studies of these organizations and the devices by which their power is translated into political power are vital to the political scientist. . . . The translation of these economic power positions differs from country to country and from historical situation to historical situation. The relative strength of the competing economic groups is far more important for the analysis of political power than the study of the political institutions proper. There are countries (like Germany and England) where the agents and managers of the economic organizations enter parliaments directly; there are others (like the United States) where the influence is more indirect. There are countries (like Germany and England) where trade unions are political as well as industrial bodies; there are others (like France and the United States in certain situations) where they apparently abstain from politics.

The devices and forms for the translation of economic power into political power thus vary considerably and yet patterns are discernible which ought to be more sharply defined on a comparative basis. A high degree of knowledge of problems of social stratification and economic organization is thus indispensable for the political scientist.

### *The Ascendance of Politics and of Bureaucracies*

The classical relationship between economics and politics changes. It now appears as if political power has begun to emancipate itself from its economic roots and, indeed, tends to become a base for the acquisition of economic power. In general, bureaucratization is believed to be the manifestation of that trend which culminates in doctrines of managerial rule: private and public managers eliminating property owners and parliaments. The trend toward bureaucratization has unquestionably two roots: the transformation of parliamentary democracy into mass democracy; and the transition of a predominantly competitive economy into a predominantly organized economy. While these trends are known and progress under our very eyes, they do not necessarily involve an assumption of political power by bureaucracies. The growth of the scope and number of bureaucratic structures may merely indicate that the social groups which rule now need more and more

bureaucracies in order to cope with the exercise of political power. But the equation of a larger number of bureaucrats with increase of their power is due to the inability (or unwillingness) to distinguish sharply three different problems involved in what is called "bureaucratization"; namely, bureaucratic behavior, bureaucratic structure, and bureaucratic power.

Bureaucratic behavior (roughly equated here with routine performance as against initiative or creative performance) is, of course, spreading. No sphere of activity is exempted from it. Whether it is beneficial or not shall not be discussed here. We should merely remember the tremendous extent to which our comforts depend on routine performances. Moreover, it is untrue that the decisions of the bureaucrats (public or private) are exclusively routine decisions. Many, indeed, are creative ones, not derived from precedent or standing rules, but highly discretionary and thus essentially law-making in character. Finally, bureaucratic organization, that is, hierarchies where commands are channeled from above to below and responsibility goes from below to above, is not confined to public life. The facts are obvious.

Though the growth of bureaucratic behavior, with the increase in the number of bureaucratic structures, is a continuous process, it does not thereby follow that power (private or public) has shifted to the bureaucracies. . . .

The Soviet Union presents a clear-cut marginal case where political power not only has made itself supreme but has become the fount of whatever economic power positions exist. Nazi Germany, on the other hand, exhibited a transitional case. It is undisputed that the Nazi party rose to power with the financial and political assistance of German big-business leaders who doubtless hoped to use the party for the promotion of their own interests. But the party, once having achieved power, emancipated itself from business control, and its political power became autonomous. The party then went further and attempted to create economic power positions for itself. Clearly the new political power was seeking to give itself an economic power base. This, indeed, is the significance of the Goering combine, the expanding enterprises of the Labor Front and the S.S., and the acquisitions resulting from Aryanization and Germanization. The war, which made it inadvisable to carry out sweeping institutional changes, interrupted the process. But it is quite safe to assume that, had there been no war or had the Nazis been victorious, the Soviet pattern would have prevailed.

The reactions to the ascendant role of political power are, as a rule, hostile. Most notable is the attempt to ascribe this phenomenon to democracy. This is, of course, essentially correct. For, as we have indicated, the attitude of democracy toward political power is undoubtedly positive. Yet more is meant



by that statement which by no means is a mere scientific one but has definite political undertones and overtones. It is implied that the growing political power will, by its inner dynamics, be abused and will ultimately lead to a totalitarian system. In this, modern criticism resumes the traditionalist critique not of political power but of democracy. Maistre and Bonald are resurrected. Proceeding from the shaky psychology of the essential evilness of man, they assert the inevitable transformation of democracy into mob rule, which, in conjunction with the modern trend of state interventionism, must culminate in totalitarianism. The remedy is some kind of aristocratic rule. A second reaction believes bureaucracy to be inimical to liberty and attempts to protect democracy by identifying it with individual liberty against the state.

Both reactions base themselves on what they call the tradition of Western civilization, the kernel of which is allegedly hostility to political power as expressed in constitutionalism. This is only a partial truth and, therefore, false. The tradition of Western civilization is more complex. Its richness was hinted at when we attempted to classify the various attitudes toward political power. Certainly, one may say that Rousseauism is a more important element in the political tradition of democracy than the essentially self-contradictory and arbitrary doctrines of Locke and of the natural law. That political power (whether democratic, aristocratic, or monarchic) can be abused is beyond doubt; but it is doubtful that abuses can be effectively checked by constitutionalism. The problem of modern democracy is much less the fencing of political power than its rational utilization and provision for effective mass participation in its exercise.

#### V. IDENTIFICATION OF POLITICAL POWER

In the Soviet Union, there is little doubt where political power resides. In Nazi Germany, after June 1934, it was equally clear that the monopolistic party concentrated all political power. In a liberal democracy (and in constitutional systems generally) the identification of political power is extremely difficult. Our contention that political power has its roots in economic power can merely provide a frame within which the analyses have to be made; for we deliberately stated: "Social power . . . is derived from private property or is against it." Since the distribution of the "for" and "against" varies, the empirical sociological analyses of this interrelationship are the crucial concern of the political scientist.

Constitutional law helps but little. The form of government may or may not truly express the distribution of power. The doctrine of separate powers

may or may not express the fact that social forces are as balanced as are the political institutions. As a rule, they are not. Constitutional law merely supplies the frame for the exercise of political power but does not indicate its holder or its functions. All traditional legal conceptions are negative ones. They limit activities but do not shape them. It is this very character of law which grants to the citizen a minimum of protection. This applies specifically to the conception of external sovereignty, a term which we have so far avoided. It does not indicate the owner of sovereign power nor the use to which this power may or can be put; it merely delimits the power of one territorial unit from any other. The conception of property is fashioned in exactly the same way. It does not reveal the object of property nor its social function; it merely protects man's control of an external piece of nature. Constitutional law, secondly, indicates the form in which political power may be legitimately exercised. While the significance of both aspects of constitutional law may not be underestimated, empirical sociological studies of the locus of political power are indispensable.

There are, however, situations which may reveal in a flash, so to speak, where political power resides. There are emergency situations such as stages of siege, martial law, and so on. It is for this reason that Carl Schmitt, the famous Nazi constitutional lawyer, stated in his pre-Nazi period: "Sovereign is he who decides the emergency situation." While not accepting the implications of Schmitt's doctrine of sovereignty, it is clear that the study of such emergency situations will yield valuable hints as to where political power actually resides in "normal" periods. . . .

#### VI. POLITICAL POWER AND FREEDOM

I stressed initially that political power is neither comparable to the concept of energy in physics nor the sole conception of political science. Yet the original formulation, power vs. idea, is too ideological. If history were a conflict between power groups and ideas, ideas would be invariably defeated. Politics is certainly the conflict between power groups, and the conflicts may be resolved by victory and defeat or by conciliation, that is, compromise. But one group may, in its struggle for power, represent more than a particular interest; it may indeed represent the idea of freedom, the idea crucial to political theory. If, for example, you analyze immigration legislation and come to the conclusion that business groups pressured for its liberalization in order to secure cheaper labor power, you have indeed done part of your task as political scientists, but only part of it. Of equal importance is the analysis of the role of immigration legislation in the historical development

of the United States. The task of political theory is thus the determination of the degree to which a power group transcends its particular interest and advocates (in Hegelian terms) universal interests.

This determination is by no means easy. In fact, the distinction between ideology and truth becomes increasingly difficult. Some of the difficulty lies in the ideological character of politics in a democracy (discussed above), but, in the last resort, it results from the tremendous weight of power on what is called public opinion. Every political system impresses the mores of the ruling group upon the population. The greater the tensions, the more stringent the impositions become. The individual then resorts to many forms of dissimulation; and, in certain periods of history, it is the liar who becomes the hero. The lie (in its many forms) becomes the protection of the individual against a universalized system of propaganda. It is for this reason that I am skeptical of the value of the various highly developed techniques of measuring attitudes, particularly attitudes which may challenge the basic foundation of a contemporary society. George Orwell, in his otherwise brilliant performance, 1984, overlooks the fact that compulsion operates wherever political power exists.

This realization was strikingly formulated by one of America's most interesting philosophers, Charles S. Peirce, in his article, "The Fixation of Belief."

The method of authority will always govern the mass of mankind; and those who wield the various forms of organized force in the state will never be convinced that dangerous reasoning ought not to be suppressed in some way. If liberty of speech is to be untrammelled from the grosser forms of constraint, then uniformity of opinion will be secured by a moral terrorism to which the respectability of society will give its thorough approval. Following the method of authority is the path of peace. Certain non-conformities are permitted; certain others (considered unsafe) are forbidden. These are different in different countries and in different ages; but, wherever you are, let it be known that you seriously hold a tabooed belief, and you may be perfectly sure of being treated with a cruelty less brutal but more refined than hunting you like a wolf. Thus, the greatest intellectual benefactors of mankind have never dared, and dare not now, to utter the whole of their thoughts; and thus a shade of *prima facie* doubt is cast upon every proposition which is considered essential to the security of society. Singularly enough, the persecution does not all come from without; but a man torments himself and is oftentimes most distressed at finding himself believing propositions which he has been brought up to regard with aversion. The peaceful and sympathetic man will, therefore, find it hard to resist the temptation to submit his opinions to authority.

# THE ANATOMY OF SOCIETY: COMMUNITY AND POLITY

## 3. DIVISIVE AND UNIFYING FACTORS IN MODERN COMMUNITY





## MAX WEBER

THE following essay by Max Weber has become the classic key to the problems of social stratification. Later theoretical work, to the extent that it is sharp and adequate, has elaborated the terms Weber here defines; but later work has also been concerned to find the indices which would enable social researchers to apply these conceptions with more precision to the social worlds of the twentieth century.

Since, on first reading, this selection is rather complex, one should bear in mind that its central concern, after all, is plain: *to make clear the meaning of certain terms and to trace out the logical range of possible relations between them.* In a simplified way, one can state the terms which the reader should have in mind as follows:

1. An *occupation* is a set of activities pursued more or less regularly as a major source of income. From the individual's standpoint, occupations refer to types of skill that are marketable. From the standpoint of society, occupations are functions that result in various goods and services, and are accordingly classified into industrial groups. Thus, (a) occupations entail various types and levels of skill, and (b) their exercise fulfills certain functions within an industrial division of labor.

2. *Class situation* has to do with the amount and source of income as these affect the chances of people to obtain other values. A class might be defined as a set of people who share similar life-chances because of their similar class situations. The two major types of class situation in modern capitalist society are those based on property and those based on wages or salaries. Since there are many kinds and varying amounts of property and income, there can be many and varied classes.

3. In Weber's terminology, *prestige*, *status*, and *honor* are virtually synonymous. All of them point to the distribution of deference within a society. Such deferences involve at least two persons: one to claim it and another to honor the claim. The bases on which various people raise prestige-claims, and the reasons others honor these claims, include property and birth, occupation and education, income and power—in fact almost anything that may invidiously distinguish one person from another. In the status system of a society these claims are organized as rules and expectations that regulate which individuals shall successfully claim prestige, from whom, in what ways, and on what basis. The level of self-esteem enjoyed by given individuals is more or less set by this status system.

4. By *caste*, Weber means a status group that is fully realized. It is a closed group that is guaranteed by convention, by law, and by rituals of a sacred or religious character. Unlike some writers, Weber would not consider the situation of the American Negro to be fully a caste, but rather "a negatively privileged status group" based upon racial descent.

5. To be *powerful* is to be able to realize one's will, even against the resistance of others. The power position of groups and of individuals typically depends upon factors of class, status, and occupation, often in intricate interrelations.

The following selection is from Weber's study *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, a work which occupied him from 1910 on, but which was published posthumously in 1921. The translation from the German is by Hans H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills.



### [CLASS AND STATUS]

#### I. ECONOMICALLY DETERMINED POWER AND THE SOCIAL ORDER

Law exists when there is a probability that an order will be upheld by a specific staff of men who will use physical or psychical compulsion with the intention of obtaining conformity with the order, or of inflicting sanctions for infringement of it. The structure of every legal order directly influences the distribution of power, economic or otherwise, within its respective community. This is true of all legal orders and not only that of the state. In general, we understand by "power" the chance of a man or of a number of men to realize their own will in a communal action even against the resistance of others who are participating in the action.

"Economically conditioned" power is not, of course, identical with "power" as such. On the contrary, the emergence of economic power may be the consequence of power existing on other grounds. Man does not strive for power only in order to enrich himself economically. Power, including economic power, may be valued "for its own sake." Very frequently the striving for power is also conditioned by the social "honor" it entails. Not all power, however, entails social honor: The typical American Boss, as well as the typical big speculator, deliberately relinquishes social honor. Quite generally, "mere economic" power, and especially "naked" money power, is by no means a recognized basis of social honor. Nor is power the only basis of social honor. Indeed, social honor, or prestige, may even be the basis of political or economic power, and very frequently has been. Power, as well as honor, may be guaranteed by the legal order, but, at least normally, it is not their primary source. The legal order is rather an additional factor that enhances the chance to hold power or honor; but it cannot always secure them.

The way in which social honor is distributed in a community between

---

This selection is from *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, translated, edited, and with an introduction by H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, Copyright 1946 by Oxford University Press, Inc., N.Y., pp. 180-194, by permission of the publisher.

typical groups participating in this distribution we may call the "social order." The social order and the economic order are, of course, similarly related to the "legal order." However, the social and the economic order are not identical. The economic order is for us merely the way in which economic goods and services are distributed and used. The social order is of course conditioned by the economic order to a high degree, and in its turn reacts upon it.

Now: "classes" [and] "status groups" . . . are phenomena of the distribution of power within a community.

## II. DETERMINATION OF CLASS-SITUATION BY MARKET-SITUATION

In our terminology, "classes" are not communities; they merely represent possible, and frequent, bases for communal action. We may speak of a "class" when (1) a number of people have in common a specific causal component of their life chances, in so far as (2) this component is represented exclusively by economic interests in the possession of goods and opportunities for income, and (3) is represented under the conditions of the commodity or labor markets. (These points refer to "class situation," which we may express more briefly as the typical chance for a supply of goods, external living conditions, and personal life experiences, in so far as this chance is determined by the amount and kind of power, or lack of such, to dispose of goods or skills for the sake of income in a given economic order. The term "class" refers to any group of people that is found in the same class situation.)

It is the most elemental economic fact that the way in which the disposition over material property is distributed among a plurality of people, meeting competitively in the market for the purpose of exchange, in itself creates specific life chances. According to the law of marginal utility this mode of distribution excludes the non-owners from competing for highly valued goods; it favors the owners and, in fact, gives to them a monopoly to acquire such goods. Other things being equal, this mode of distribution monopolizes the opportunities for profitable deals for all those who, provided with goods, do not necessarily have to exchange them. It increases, at least generally, their power in price wars with those who, being propertyless, have nothing to offer but their services in native form or goods in a form constituted through their own labor, and who above all are compelled to get rid of these products in order barely to subsist. This mode of distribution gives to the propertied a monopoly on the possibility of transferring property from the sphere of use as a "fortune," to the sphere of "capital goods"; that is, it gives



them the entrepreneurial function and all chances to share directly or indirectly in returns on capital. All this holds true within the area in which pure market conditions prevail. "Property" and "lack of property" are, therefore, the basic categories of all class situations. It does not matter whether these two categories become effective in price wars or in competitive struggles.

Within these categories, however, class situations are further differentiated: on the one hand, according to the kind of property that is usable for returns; and, on the other hand, according to the kind of services that can be offered in the market. Ownership of domestic buildings; productive establishments; warehouses; stores; agriculturally usable land, large and small holdings—quantitative differences with possibly qualitative consequences—ownership of mines; cattle; men (slaves); disposition over mobile instruments of production, or capital goods of all sorts, especially money or objects that can be exchanged for money easily and at any time; disposition over products of one's own labor or of others' labor differing according to their various distances from consumability; disposition over transferable monopolies of any kind—all these distinctions differentiate the class situations of the propertied just as does the "meaning" which they can and do give to the utilization of property, especially to property which has money equivalence. Accordingly, the propertied, for instance, may belong to the class of rentiers or to the class of entrepreneurs.

Those who have no property but who offer services are differentiated just as much according to their kinds of services as according to the way in which they make use of these services, in a continuous or discontinuous relation to a recipient. But always this is the generic connotation of the concept of class: that the kind of chance in the *market* is the decisive moment which presents a common condition for the individual's fate. "Class situation" is, in this sense, ultimately "market situation." The effect of naked possession *per se*, which among cattle breeders gives the non-owning slave or serf into the power of the cattle owner, is only a forerunner of real "class" formation. However, in the cattle loan and in the naked severity of the law of debts in such communities, for the first time mere "possession" as such emerges as decisive for the fate of the individual. This is very much in contrast to the agricultural communities based on labor. The creditor-debtor relation becomes the basis of "class situations" only in those cities where a "credit market," however primitive, with rates of interest increasing according to the extent of dearth and a factual monopolization of credits, is developed by a plutocracy. Therewith "class struggles" begin.

Those men whose fate is not determined by the chance of using goods or services for themselves on the market, e.g. slaves, are not, however, a "class" in the technical sense of the term. They are, rather, a "status group."

### III. COMMUNAL ACTION FLOWING FROM CLASS INTEREST

According to our terminology, the factor that creates "class" is unambiguously economic interest, and indeed, only those interests involved in the existence of the "market." Nevertheless, the concept of "class-interest" is an ambiguous one: even as an empirical concept it is ambiguous as soon as one understands by it something other than the factual direction of interests following with a certain probability from the class situation for a certain "average" of those people subjected to the class situation. The class situation and other circumstances remaining the same, the direction in which the individual worker, for instance, is likely to pursue his interests may vary widely, according to whether he is constitutionally qualified for the task at hand to a high, to an average, or to a low degree. In the same way, the direction of interests may vary according to whether or not a *communal* action of a larger or smaller portion of those commonly affected by the "class situation," or even an association among them, e.g. a "trade union," has grown out of the class situation from which the individual may or may not expect promising results. (Communal action refers to that action which is oriented to the feeling of the actors that they belong together. Societal action, on the other hand, is oriented to a rationally motivated adjustment of interests.) The rise of societal or even of communal action from a common class situation is by no means a universal phenomenon.

The class situation may be restricted in its effects to the generation of essentially *similar* reactions, that is to say, within our terminology, of "mass actions." However, it may not have even this result. Furthermore, often merely an amorphous communal action emerges. For example, the "murmuring" of the workers known in ancient oriental ethics: the moral disapproval of the work-master's conduct, which in its practical significance was probably equivalent to an increasingly typical phenomenon of precisely the latest industrial development, namely, the "slow-down" (the deliberate limiting of work effort) of laborers by virtue of tacit agreement. The degree in which "communal action" and possibly "societal action," emerges from the "mass actions" of the members of a class is linked to general cultural conditions, especially to those of an intellectual sort. It is also linked to the extent of the contrasts that have already evolved, and is especially linked to the *transparency* of the connections between the causes and the consequences

of the "class situation." For however different life chances may be, this fact in itself, according to all experience, by no means gives birth to "class action" (communal action by the members of a class). The fact of being conditioned and the results of the class situation must be distinctly recognizable. For only then the contrast of life chances can be felt not as an absolutely given fact to be accepted, but as a resultant from either (1) the given distribution of property, or (2) the structure of the concrete economic order. It is only then that people may react against the class structure not only through acts of an intermittent and irrational protest, but in the form of rational association. There have been "class situations" of the first category (1) of a specifically naked and transparent sort, in the urban centers of antiquity and during the Middle Ages; especially then, when great fortunes were accumulated by factually monopolized trading in industrial products of these localities or in foodstuffs. Furthermore, under certain circumstances, in the rural economy of the most diverse periods, when agriculture was increasingly exploited in a profit-making manner. The most important historical example of the second category (2) is the class situation of the modern "proletariat."

#### IV. TYPES OF "CLASS STRUGGLE"

Thus every class may be the carrier of any one of the possibly innumerable forms of "class action," but this is not necessarily so. In any case, a class does not in itself constitute a community. To treat "class" conceptually as having the same value as "community" leads to distortion. That men in the same class situation regularly react in mass actions to such tangible situations as economic ones in the direction of those interests that are most adequate to their average number is an important and after all simple fact for the understanding of historical events. Above all, this fact must not lead to that kind of pseudo-scientific operation with the concepts of "class" and "class interests" so frequently found these days, and which has found its most classic expression in the statement of a talented author, that the individual may be in error concerning his interests but that the "class" is "infallible" about its interests. Yet, if classes as such are not communities, nevertheless class situations emerge only on the basis of communalization. The communal action that brings forth class situations, however, is not basically action between members of the identical class; it is an action between members of different classes. Communal actions that directly determine the class situation of the worker and the entrepreneur are: the labor market, the commodities market, and the capitalistic enterprise. But, in its turn, the existence of a capitalistic enterprise presupposes that a very specific communal action exists and that

it is specifically structured to protect the possession of goods *per se*, and especially the power of individuals to dispose, in principle freely, over the means of production. The existence of a capitalistic enterprise is preconditioned by a specific kind of "legal order." Each kind of class situation, and above all when it rests upon the power of property *per se*, will become most clearly efficacious when all other determinants of reciprocal relations are, as far as possible, eliminated in their significance. It is in this way that the utilization of the power of property in the market obtains its most sovereign importance.

Now "status groups" hinder the strict carrying through of the sheer market principle. In the present context they are of interest to us only from this one point of view. Before we briefly consider them, note that not much of a general nature can be said about the more specific kinds of antagonism between "classes" (in our meaning of the term). The great shift, which has been going on continuously in the past, and up to our times, may be summarized although at the cost of some precision: the struggle in which class situations are effective has progressively shifted from consumption credit toward, first, competitive struggles in the commodity market and, then, toward price wars on the labor market. The "class struggles" of antiquity—to the extent that they were genuine class struggles and not struggles between status groups—were initially carried on by indebted peasants, and perhaps also by artisans threatened by debt bondage and struggling against urban creditors. For debt bondage is the normal result of the differentiation of wealth in commercial cities, especially in seaport cities. A similar situation has existed among cattle breeders. Debt relationships as such produced class action up to the time of Catiline. Along with this, and with an increase in provision of grain for the city by transporting it from the outside, the struggle over the means of sustenance emerged. It centered in the first place around the provision of bread and the determination of the price of bread. It lasted throughout antiquity and the entire Middle Ages. The propertyless as such flocked together against those who actually and supposedly were interested in the dearth of bread. This fight spread until it involved all those commodities essential to the way of life and to handicraft production. There were only incipient discussions of wage disputes in antiquity and in the Middle Ages. But they have been slowly increasing up into modern times. In the earlier periods they were completely secondary to slave rebellions as well as to fights in the commodity market.

The propertyless of antiquity and of the Middle Ages protested against monopolies, pre-emption, forestalling, and the withholding of goods from



the market in order to raise prices. Today the central issue is the determination of the price of labor.

This transition is represented by the fight for access to the market and for the determination of the price of products. Such fights went on between merchants and workers in the putting-out system of domestic handicraft during the transition to modern times. Since it is quite a general phenomenon we must mention here that the class antagonisms that are conditioned through the market situation are usually most bitter between those who actually and directly participate as opponents in price wars. It is not the rentier, the share-holder, and the banker who suffer the ill will of the worker, but almost exclusively the manufacturer and the business executives who are the direct opponents of workers in price wars. This is so in spite of the fact that it is precisely the cash boxes of the rentier, the share-holder, and the banker into which the more or less "unearned" gains flow, rather than into the pockets of the manufacturers or of the business executives. This simple state of affairs has very frequently been decisive for the role the class situation has played in the formation of political parties. For example, it has made possible the varieties of patriarchal socialism and the frequent attempts—formerly, at least—of threatened status groups to form alliances with the proletariat against the "bourgeoisie."

#### V. STATUS HONOR

In contrast to classes, *status groups* are normally communities. They are, however, often of an amorphous kind. In contrast to the purely economically determined "class situation" we wish to designate as "status situation" every typical component of the life fate of men that is determined by a specific, positive or negative, social estimation of *honor*. This honor may be connected with any quality shared by a plurality, and, of course, it can be knit to a class situation: class distinctions are linked in the most varied ways with status distinctions. Property as such is not always recognized as a status qualification, but in the long run it is, and with extraordinary regularity. In the subsistence economy of the organized neighborhood, very often the richest man is simply the chieftain. However, this often means only an honorific preference. For example, in the so-called pure modern "democracy," that is, one devoid of any expressly ordered status privileges for individuals, it may be that only the families coming under approximately the same tax class dance with one another. This example is reported of certain smaller Swiss cities. But status honor need not necessarily be linked with a "class situation." On

the contrary, it normally stands in sharp opposition to the pretensions of sheer property.

Both propertied and propertyless people can belong to the same status group, and frequently they do with very tangible consequences. This "equality" of social esteem may, however, in the long run become quite precarious. The "equality" of status among the American "gentlemen," for instance, is expressed by the fact that outside the subordination determined by the different functions of "business," it would be considered strictly repugnant—wherever the old tradition still prevails—if even the richest "chief," while playing billiards or cards in his club in the evening, would not treat his "clerk" as in every sense fully his equal in birthright. It would be repugnant if the American "chief" would bestow upon his "clerk" the condescending "benevolence" marking a distinction of "position," which the German chief can never dis sever from his attitude. This is one of the most important reasons why in America the German "clubby-ness" has never been able to attain the attraction that the American clubs have.

#### VI. GUARANTEES OF STATUS STRATIFICATION

In content, status honor is normally expressed by the fact that above all else a specific *style of life* can be expected from all those who wish to belong to the circle. Linked with this expectation are restrictions on "social" intercourse (that is, intercourse which is not subservient to economic or any other of business's "functional" purposes). These restrictions may confine normal marriages to within the status circle and may lead to complete endogamous closure. As soon as there is not a mere individual and socially irrelevant imitation of another style of life, but an agreed-upon communal action of this closing character, the "status" development is under way.

In its characteristic form, stratification by "status groups" on the basis of conventional styles of life evolves at the present time in the United States out of the traditional democracy. For example, only the resident of a certain street ("the street") is considered as belonging to "society," is qualified for social intercourse, and is visited and invited. Above all, this differentiation evolves in such a way as to make for strict submission to the fashion that is dominant at a given time in society. This submission to fashion also exists among men in America to a degree unknown in Germany. Such submission is considered to be an indication of the fact that a given man *pretends* to qualify as a gentleman. This submission decides, at least *prima facie*, that he will be treated as such. And this recognition becomes just as important for

his employment chances in "swank" establishments, and above all, for social intercourse and marriage with "esteemed" families, as the qualification for dueling among Germans in the Kaiser's day. As for the rest: certain families resident for a long time, and, of course, correspondingly wealthy, e.g. "F.F.V., i.e. First Families of Virginia," or the actual or alleged descendants of the "Indian Princess" Pocahontas, of the Pilgrim fathers, or of the Knickerbockers, the members of almost inaccessible sects and all sorts of circles setting themselves apart by means of any other characteristics and badges . . . all these elements usurp "status" honor. The development of status is essentially a question of stratification resting upon usurpation. Such usurpation is the normal origin of almost all status honor. But the road from this purely conventional situation to legal privilege, positive or negative, is easily traveled as soon as a certain stratification of the social order has in fact been "lived in" and has achieved stability by virtue of a stable distribution of economic power.

#### VII. "ETHNIC" SEGREGATION AND "CASTE"

Where the consequences have been realized to their full extent, the status group evolves into a closed "caste." Status distinctions are then guaranteed not merely by conventions and laws, but also by *rituals*. This occurs in such a way that every physical contact with a member of any caste that is considered to be "lower" by the members of a "higher" caste is considered as making for a ritualistic impurity and to be a stigma which must be expiated by a religious act. Individual castes develop quite distinct cults and gods.

In general, however, the status structure reaches such extreme consequences only where there are underlying differences which are held to be "ethnic." The "caste" is, indeed, the normal form in which ethnic communities usually live side by side in a "societalized" manner. These ethnic communities believe in blood relationship and exclude exogamous marriage and social intercourse. Such a caste situation is part of the phenomenon of "pariah" peoples and is found all over the world. These people form communities, acquire specific occupational traditions of handicrafts or of other arts, and cultivate a belief in their ethnic community. They live in a "diaspora" strictly segregated from all personal intercourse, except that of an unavoidable sort, and their situation is legally precarious. Yet, by virtue of their economic indispensability, they are tolerated, indeed, frequently privileged, and they live in interspersed political communities. The Jews are the most impressive historical example.

A "status" segregation grown into a "caste" differs in its structure from a

mere "ethnic" segregation: the caste structure transforms the horizontal and unconnected coexistences of ethnically segregated groups into a vertical social system of super- and subordination. Correctly formulated: a comprehensive societalization integrates the ethnically divided communities into specific political and communal action. In their consequences they differ precisely in this way: ethnic coexistences condition a mutual repulsion and disdain but allow each ethnic community to consider its own honor as the highest one; the caste structure brings about a social subordination and an acknowledgment of "more honor" in favor of the privileged caste and status groups. This is due to the fact that in the caste structure ethnic distinctions as such have become "functional" distinctions within the political societalization (warriors, priests, artisans that are politically important for war and for building, and so on). But even pariah people who are most despised are usually apt to continue cultivating in some manner that which is equally peculiar to ethnic and to status communities: the belief in their own specific "honor." This is the case with the Jews.

Only with the negatively privileged status groups does the "sense of dignity" take a specific deviation. A sense of dignity is the precipitation in individuals of social honor and of conventional demands which a positively privileged status group raises for the deportment of its members. The sense of dignity that characterizes positively privileged status groups is naturally related to their "being" which does not transcend itself, that is, it is to their "beauty and excellence" (*καλο-κάγαθια*). Their kingdom is "of this world." They live for the present and by exploiting their great past. The sense of dignity of the negatively privileged strata naturally refers to a future lying beyond the present, whether it is of this life or of another. In other words, it must be nurtured by the belief in a providential "mission" and by a belief in a specific honor before God. The "chosen people's" dignity is nurtured by a belief either that in the beyond "the last will be the first," or that in this life a Messiah will appear to bring forth into the light of the world which has cast them out the hidden honor of the pariah people. This simple state of affairs, and not the "resentment" which is so strongly emphasized in Nietzsche's much admired construction in the *Genealogy of Morals*, is the source of the religiosity cultivated by pariah status groups. In passing, we may note that resentment may be accurately applied only to a limited extent; for one of Nietzsche's main examples, Buddhism, it is not at all applicable.

Incidentally, the development of status groups from ethnic segregations is by no means the normal phenomenon. On the contrary, since objective "racial differences" are by no means basic to every subjective sentiment of



an ethnic community, the ultimately racial foundation of status structure is rightly and absolutely a question of the concrete individual case. Very frequently a status group is instrumental in the production of a thoroughbred anthropological type. Certainly a status group is to a high degree effective in producing extreme types, for they select personally qualified individuals (e.g. the Knighthood selects those who are fit for warfare, physically and psychically). But selection is far from being the only, or the predominant, way in which status groups are formed: Political membership or class situation has at all times been at least as frequently decisive. And today the class situation is by far the predominant factor, for of course the possibility of a style of life expected for members of a status group is usually conditioned economically.

#### VIII. STATUS PRIVILEGES

For all practical purposes, stratification by status goes hand in hand with a monopolization of ideal and material goods or opportunities, in a manner we have come to know as typical. Besides the specific status honor, which always rests upon distance and exclusiveness, we find all sorts of material monopolies. Such honorific preferences may consist of the privilege of wearing special costumes, of eating special dishes taboo to others, of carrying arms—which is most obvious in its consequences—the right to pursue certain non-professional dilettante artistic practices, e.g. to play certain musical instruments. Of course, material monopolies provide the most effective motives for the exclusiveness of a status group; although, in themselves, they are rarely sufficient, almost always they come into play to some extent. Within a status circle there is the question of intermarriage: the interest of the families in the monopolization of potential bridegrooms is at least of equal importance and is parallel to the interest in the monopolization of daughters. The daughters of the circle must be provided for. With an increased inclosure of the status group, the conventional preferential opportunities for special employment grow into a legal monopoly of special offices for the members. Certain goods become objects for monopolization by status groups. In the typical fashion these include “entailed estates” and frequently also the possessions of serfs or bondsmen and, finally, special trades. This monopolization occurs positively when the status group is exclusively entitled to own and to manage them; and negatively when, in order to maintain its specific way of life, the status group must *not* own and manage them.

The decisive role of a “style of life” in status “honor” means that status groups are the specific bearers of all “conventions.” In whatever way it may

be manifest, all "stylization" of life either originates in status groups or is at least conserved by them. Even if the principles of status conventions differ greatly, they reveal certain typical traits, especially among those strata which are most privileged. Quite generally, among privileged status groups there is a status disqualification that operates against the performance of common physical labor. This disqualification is now "setting in" in America against the old tradition of esteem for labor. Very frequently every rational economic pursuit, and especially "entrepreneurial activity," is looked upon as a disqualification of status. Artistic and literary activity is also considered as degrading work as soon as it is exploited for income, or at least when it is connected with hard physical exertion. An example is the sculptor working like a mason in his dusty smock as over against the painter in his salon-like "studio" and those forms of musical practice that are acceptable to the status group.

#### IX. ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND EFFECTS OF STATUS STRATIFICATION

The frequent disqualification of the gainfully employed as such is a direct result of the principle of status stratification peculiar to the social order, and of course, of this principle's opposition to a distribution of power which is regulated exclusively through the market. These two factors operate along with various individual ones, which will be touched upon below.

We have seen above that the market and its processes "knows no personal distinctions": "functional" interests dominate it. It knows nothing of "honor." The status order means precisely the reverse, viz.: stratification in terms of "honor" and of styles of life peculiar to status groups as such. If mere economic acquisition and naked economic power still bearing the stigma of its extra-status origin could bestow upon anyone who has won it the same honor as those who are interested in status by virtue of style of life claim for themselves, the status order would be threatened at its very root. This is the more so as, given equality of status honor, property *per se* represents an addition even if it is not overtly acknowledged to be such. Yet if such acquisition and power gave the agent any honor at all, his wealth would result in his attaining more honor than those who successfully claim honor by virtue of style of life. Therefore all groups having interests in the status order react with special sharpness precisely against the pretensions of purely economic acquisition. In most cases they react the more vigorously the more they feel themselves threatened. Calderón's respectful treatment of the peasant, for instance, as opposed to Shakespeare's simultaneous and ostensible disdain of the *canaille* illustrates the different way in which a firmly structured status order

reacts as compared with a status order that has become economically precarious. This is an example of a state of affairs that recurs everywhere. Precisely because of the rigorous reactions against the claims of property *per se*, the "parvenu" is never accepted, personally and without reservation, by the privileged status groups, no matter how completely his style of life has been adjusted to theirs; they will only accept his descendants who have been educated in the conventions of their status group and who have never besmirched its honor by their own economic labor.

As to the general *effect* of the status order, only one consequence can be stated, but it is a very important one: the hindrance of the free development of the market occurs first for those goods which status groups directly withheld from free exchange by monopolization. This monopolization may be effected either legally or conventionally. For example, in many Hellenic cities during the epoch of status groups, and also originally in Rome, the inherited estate (as is shown by the old formula for indiction against spendthrifts) was monopolized just as were the estates of knights, peasants, priests, and especially the clientele of the craft and merchant guilds. The market is restricted, and the power of naked property *per se*, which gives its stamp to "class formation," is pushed into the background. The results of this process can be most varied. Of course, they do not necessarily weaken the contrasts in the economic situation. Frequently they strengthen these contrasts, and in any case, where stratification by status permeates a community as strongly as was the case in all political communities of antiquity and of the Middle Ages, one can never speak of a genuinely free market competition as we understand it today. There are wider effects than this direct exclusion of special goods from the market. From the contrariety between the status order and the purely economic order mentioned above, it follows that in most instances the notion of honor peculiar to status absolutely abhors that which is essential to the market: higgling. Honor abhors higgling among peers and occasionally it taboos higgling for the members of a status group in general. Therefore, everywhere some status groups, and usually the most influential, consider almost any kind of overt participation in economic acquisition as absolutely stigmatizing.

With some over-simplification, one might thus say that "classes" are stratified according to their relations to the production and acquisition of goods; whereas "status groups" are stratified according to the principles of their *consumption* of goods as represented by special "styles of life."

An "occupational group" is also a status group. For normally, it successfully claims social honor only by virtue of the special style of life which may

be determined by it. The differences between classes and status groups frequently overlap. It is precisely those status communities most strictly segregated in terms of honor (viz. the Indian castes) who today show, although within very rigid limits, a relatively high degree of indifference to pecuniary income. However, the Brahmins seek such income in many different ways.

As to the general economic conditions making for the predominance of stratification by "status," only very little can be said. When the bases of the acquisition and distribution of goods are relatively stable, stratification by status is favored. Every technological repercussion and economic transformation threatens stratification by status and pushes the class situation into the foreground. Epochs and countries in which the naked class situation is of predominant significance are regularly the periods of technical and economic transformations. And every slowing down of the shifting of economic stratifications leads, in due course, to the growth of status structures and makes for a resuscitation of the important role of social honor. . . .



## C. WRIGHT MILLS

THE ideas of Karl Marx have occupied a pivotal position in the study of social stratification. Central to Marx's conception of society was the notion of the existence of objectively identifiable "classes," defined in terms of their relation to the "means of production." Marx viewed the capitalist, industrial world as deeply and irrevocably divided into two massive, antagonistic "classes," the capitalists, owners of the means of production on the one hand, and the proletariat, propertyless wage workers on the other. Marx recognized the presence of intermediate strata, particularly of a "middle class" of small property owners and professional people, but it was his conviction that this "middle class" would in time become progressively "proletarianized" as it was squeezed out of existence by the development of monopoly capitalism.

In the years after the death of Marx in 1883, it became more and more obvious that the social system of the Western industrial world had not developed in quite the way he predicted. Despite the fact that industrial and commercial activity has tended to become concentrated into large corporate holdings and despite the fact that the wage-earning population has increased, the "middle class" has not decreased either in number or in influence. On the contrary, it has expanded. This has not been accomplished, however, without a change in the character of the "middle class." Particularly in the United States, but also in the rest of the capitalist world, a "new middle class" of extraordinary vitality seems to have emerged. This phenomenon has increasingly occupied the attention of students of society. In the selection which follows, taken from the book *White Collar* (1951) by C. Wright Mills, the author explores the difference between the old and the new middle classes, and examines the social and political significance of the prominence of the "new middle class" in American society.

C. Wright Mills was born in Texas in 1916 and received his academic training at the University of Texas and the University of Wisconsin. He has directed research projects for Federal and state governments, for business corporations and labor unions, at the University of Maryland, and at Columbia University, where he is associate professor of sociology. In addition to *White Collar*, he is the author of *New Men of Power* (1948), a study of American labor leaders, and is the co-editor and translator (with Hans Gerth) of the writings of Max Weber.



## WHITE COLLAR

*The New Middle Class, I*

In the early nineteenth century, although there are no exact figures, probably four-fifths of the occupied population were self-employed enterprisers; by 1870, only about one-third, and in 1940, only about one-fifth, were still in this old middle class. Many of the remaining four-fifths of the people who now earn a living do so by working for the 2 or 3 per cent of the population who now own 40 or 50 per cent of the private property in the United States. Among these workers are the members of the new middle class, white-collar people on salary. For them, as for wage-workers, America has become a nation of employees for whom independent property is out of range. Labor markets, not control of property, determine their chances to receive income, exercise power, enjoy prestige, learn and use skills.

<i>The Labor Force</i>	1870	1940
Old Middle Class	33%	20%
New Middle Class	6	25
Wage-Workers	61	55
Total	100%	100%

## I. OCCUPATIONAL CHANGE

Of the three broad strata composing modern society, only the new middle class has steadily grown in proportion to the whole. Eighty years ago, there were three-quarters of a million middle-class employees; by 1940, there were over twelve and a half million. In that period the old middle class increased 135 per cent; wage-workers, 255 per cent; new middle class, 1600 per cent.

The employees composing the new middle class do not make up one single compact stratum. They have not emerged on a single horizontal level, but have been shuffled out simultaneously on the several levels of modern society; they now form, as it were, a new pyramid within the old pyramid of society at large, rather than a horizontal layer. The great bulk of the new middle class are of the lower middle-income brackets, but regardless of how social stature is measured, types of white-collar men and women range from almost the top to almost the bottom of modern society.

The managerial stratum, subject to minor variations during these decades, has dropped slightly, from 14 to 10 per cent; the salaried professionals, dis-

playing the same minor ups and downs, have dropped from 30 to 25 per cent of the new middle class. The major shifts in over-all composition have been in the relative decline of the sales group, occurring most sharply around 1900, from 44 to 25 per cent of the total new middle class; and the steady rise of the office workers, from 12 to 40 per cent. Today the three largest occupational groups in the white-collar stratum are schoolteachers, salespeople in and out of stores, and assorted office workers. These three form the white-collar mass.

<i>New Middle Class</i>	1870	1940
Managers	14%	10%
Salaried Professionals	30	25
Salespeople	44	25
Office Workers	12	40
Total	100%	100%

White-collar occupations now engage well over half the members of the American middle class as a whole. Between 1870 and 1940, white-collar workers rose from 15 to 56 per cent of the middle brackets, while the old middle class declined from 85 to 44 per cent:

<i>The Middle Classes</i>	1870	1940
OLD MIDDLE CLASS	85%	44%
Farmers	62	23
Businessmen	21	19
Free Professionals	2	2
NEW MIDDLE CLASS	15%	56%
Managers	2	6
Salaried Professionals	4	14
Salespeople	7	14
Office Workers	2	22
Total Middle Classes	100%	100%

Negatively, the transformation of the middle class is a shift from property to no-property; positively, it is a shift from property to a new axis of stratification, occupation. The nature and well-being of the old middle class can best be sought in the condition of entrepreneurial property; of the new middle class, in the economics and sociology of occupations. The numerical decline of the older, independent sectors of the middle class is an incident in the centralization of property; the numerical rise of the newer salaried employees is due to the industrial mechanics by which the occupations composing the new middle class have arisen.

## 2. INDUSTRIAL MECHANICS

In modern society, occupations are specific functions within a social division of labor, as well as skills sold for income on a labor market. Contemporary divisions of labor involve a hitherto unknown specialization of skill: from arranging abstract symbols, at \$1000 an hour, to working a shovel, for \$1000 a year. The major shifts in occupations since the Civil War have assumed this industrial trend: as a proportion of the labor force, fewer individuals manipulate *things*, more handle *people* and *symbols*.

This shift in needed skills is another way of describing the rise of the white-collar workers, for their characteristic skills involve the handling of paper and money and people. They are expert at dealing with people transiently and impersonally; they are masters of the commercial, professional, and technical relationship. The one thing they do not do is live by making things; rather, they live off the social machineries that organize and co-ordinate the people who do make things. White-collar people help turn what someone else has made into profit for still another; some of them are closer to the means of production, supervising the work of actual manufacture and recording what is done. They are the people who keep track; they man the paper routines involved in distributing what is produced. They provide technical and personal services, and they teach others the skills which they themselves practice, as well as all other skills transmitted by teaching.

As the proportion of workers needed for the extraction and production of things declines, the proportion needed for servicing, distributing, and co-ordinating rises. In 1870, over three-fourths, and in 1940, slightly less than one-half of the total employed were engaged in producing things.

	1870	1940
Producing	77%	46%
Servicing	13	20
Distributing	7	23
Co-ordinating	3	11
Total employed	100%	100%

By 1940, the proportion of white-collar workers of those employed in industries primarily involved in the production of things was 11 per cent; in service industries, 32 per cent; in distribution, 44 per cent; and in co-ordination, 60 per cent. The white-collar industries themselves have grown, and within each industry the white-collar occupations have grown. Three trends lie back



of the fact that the white-collar ranks have thus been the most rapidly growing of modern occupations: the increasing productivity of machinery used in manufacturing; the magnification of distribution; and the increasing scale of co-ordination.

The immense productivity of mass-production technique and the increased application of technologic rationality are the first open secrets of modern occupational change: fewer men turn out more things in less time. In the middle of the nineteenth century, as J. F. Dewhurst and his associates have calculated, some 17.6 billion horsepower hours were expended in American industry, only 6 per cent by mechanical energy; by the middle of the twentieth century, 410.4 billion horsepower hours will be expended, 94 per cent by mechanical energy. This industrial revolution seems to be permanent, seems to go on through war and boom and slump; thus "a decline in production results in a more than proportional decline in employment; and an increase in production results in a less than proportional increase in employment."

Technology has thus narrowed the stratum of workers needed for given volumes of output; it has also altered the types and proportions of skill needed in the production process. Know-how, once an attribute of the mass of workers, is now in the machine and the engineering elite who design it. Machines displace unskilled workmen, make craft skills unnecessary, push up front the automatic motions of the machine-operative. Workers composing the new lower class are predominantly semi-skilled: their proportion in the urban wage-worker stratum has risen from 31 per cent in 1910 to 41 per cent in 1940.

The manpower economies brought about by machinery and the large-scale rationalization of labor forces, so apparent in production and extraction, have not, as yet, been applied so extensively in distribution—transportation, communication, finance, and trade. Yet without an elaboration of these means of distribution, the wide-flung operations of multi-plan producers could not be integrated nor their products distributed. Therefore, the proportion of people engaged in distribution has enormously increased so that today about one-fourth of the labor force is so engaged. Distribution has expanded more than production because of the lag in technological application in this field, and because of the persistence of individual and small-scale entrepreneurial units at the same time that the market has been enlarged and the need to market has been deepened.

Behind this expansion of the distributive occupations lies the central prob-

lem of modern capitalism: to whom can the available goods be sold? As volume swells, the intensified search for markets draws more workers into the distributive occupations of trade, promotion, advertising. As far-flung and intricate markets come into being, and as the need to find and create even more markets becomes urgent, "middle men" who move, store, finance, promote, and sell goods are knit into a vast network of enterprises and occupations.

The physical aspect of distribution involves wide and fast transportation networks; the co-ordination of marketing involves communication; the search for markets and the selling of goods involves trade, including wholesale and retail outlets as well as financial agencies for commodity and capital markets. Each of these activities engages more people, but the manual jobs among them do not increase so fast as the white-collar tasks.

Transportation, growing rapidly after the Civil War, began to decline in point of the numbers of people involved before 1930; but this decline took place among wage-workers; the proportion of white-collar workers employed in transportation continued to rise. By 1940, some 23 per cent of the people in transportation were white-collar employees. As a new industrial segment of the U.S. economy, the communication industry has never been run by large numbers of free enterprisers; at the outset it needed large numbers of technical and other white-collar workers. By 1940, some 77 per cent of its people were in new middle-class occupations.

Trade is now the third largest segment of the occupational structure, exceeded only by farming and manufacturing. A few years after the Civil War less than 5 out of every 100 workers were engaged in trade; by 1940 almost 12 out of every 100 workers were so employed. But, while 70 per cent of those in wholesaling and retailing were free enterprisers in 1870, and less than 3 per cent were white collar, by 1940, of the people engaged in retail trade 27 per cent were free enterprisers; 41 per cent white-collar employees.

Newer methods of merchandising, such as credit financing, have resulted in an even greater percentage increase in the "financial" than in the "commercial" agents of distribution. Branch banking has lowered the status of many banking employees to the clerical level, and reduced the number of executive positions. By 1940, of all employees in finance and real estate 70 per cent were white-collar workers of the new middle class.

The organizational reason for the expansion of the white-collar occupations is the rise of big business and big government, and the consequent trend of modern social structure, the steady growth of bureaucracy. In every

branch of the economy, as firms merge and corporations become dominant, free entrepreneurs become employees, and the calculations of accountant, statistician, bookkeeper, and clerk in these corporations replace the free "movement of prices" as the co-ordinating agent of the economic system. The rise of thousands of big and little bureaucracies and the elaborate specialization of the system as a whole create the need for many men and women to plan, co-ordinate, and administer new routines for others. In moving from smaller to larger and more elaborate units of economic activity, increased proportions of employees are drawn into co-ordinating and managing. Managerial and professional employees and office workers of varied sorts—floorwalkers, foremen, office managers—are needed; people to whom subordinates report, and who in turn report to superiors, are links in chains of power and obedience, co-ordinating and supervising other occupational experiences, functions, and skills. And all over the economy, the proportion of clerks of all sorts has increased: from 1 or 2 per cent in 1870 to 10 or 11 per cent of all gainful workers in 1940.

As the worlds of business undergo these changes, the increased tasks of government on all fronts draw still more people into occupations that regulate and service property and men. In response to the largeness and predatory complications of business, the crises of slump, the nationalization of the rural economy and small-town markets, the flood of immigrants, the urgencies of war and the march of technology disrupting social life, government increases its co-ordinating and regulating tasks. Public regulations, social services, and business taxes require more people to make mass records and to integrate people, firms, and goods, both within government and in the various segments of business and private life. All branches of government have grown, although the most startling increases are found in the executive branch of the Federal Government, where the needs for co-ordinating the economy have been most prevalent.

As marketable activities, occupations change (1) with shifts in the skills required, as technology and rationalization are unevenly applied across the economy; (2) with the enlargement and intensification of marketing operations in both the commodity and capital markets; and (3) with shifts in the organization of the division of work, as expanded organizations require co-ordination, management, and recording. The mechanics involved within and between these three trends have led to the numerical expansion of white-collar employees.

There are other less obvious ways in which the occupational structure is

shaped: high agricultural tariffs, for example, delay the decline of farming as an occupation; were Argentine beef allowed to enter duty-free, the number of meat producers here might diminish. City ordinances and zoning laws abolish peddlers and affect the types of construction workers that prevail. Most states have bureaus of standards which limit entrance into professions and semi-professions; at the same time members of these occupations form associations in the attempt to control entrance into "their" market. More successful than most trade unions, such professional associations as the American Medical Association have managed for several decades to level off the proportion of physicians and surgeons. Every phase of the slump-war-boom cycle influences the numerical importance of various occupations; for instance, the movement back and forth between "construction worker" and small "contractor" is geared to slumps and booms in building.

The pressures from these loosely organized parts of the occupational world draw conscious managerial agencies into the picture. The effects of attempts to manage occupational change, directly and indirectly, are not yet great, except of course during wars, when government freezes men in their jobs or offers incentives and compulsions to remain in old occupations or shift to new ones. Yet, increasingly the class levels and occupational composition of the nation are managed; the occupational structure of the United States is being slowly reshaped as a gigantic corporate group. It is subject not only to the pulling of autonomous markets and the pushing of technology but to an "allocation of personnel" from central points of control. Occupational change thus becomes more conscious, at least to those who are coming to be in charge of it.

### 3. WHITE-COLLAR PYRAMIDS

Occupations, in terms of which we circumscribe the new middle class, involve several ways of ranking people. As specific activities, they entail various types and levels of *skill*, and their exercise fulfils certain *functions* within an industrial division of labor. These are the skills and functions we have been examining statistically. As sources of income, occupations are connected with *class* position; and since they normally carry an expected quota of prestige, on and off the job, they are relevant to *status* position. They also involve certain degrees of *power* over other people, directly in terms of the job, and indirectly in other social areas. Occupations are thus tied to class, status, and power as well as to skill and function; to understand the occupations composing the new middle class, we must consider them in terms of each of these dimensions.



"Class situation" in its simplest objective sense has to do with the amount and source of income. Today, occupation rather than property is the source of income for most of those who receive any direct income: the possibilities of selling their services in the labor market, rather than of profitably buying and selling their property and its yields, now determine the life-chances of most of the middle class. All things money can buy and many that men dream about are theirs by virtue of occupational income. In new middle-class occupations men work for someone else on someone else's property. This is the clue to many differences between the old and new middle classes, as well as to the contrast between the older world of the small propertied entrepreneur and the occupational structure of the new society. If the old middle class once fought big property structures in the name of small, free properties, the new middle class, like the wage-workers in latter-day capitalism, has been, from the beginning, dependent upon large properties for job security.

Wage-workers in the factory and on the farm are on the propertyless bottom of the occupational structure, depending upon the equipment owned by others, earning wages for the time they spend at work. In terms of property, the white-collar people are *not* "in between Capital and Labor"; they are in exactly the same property-class position as the wage-workers. They have no direct financial tie to the means of production, no prime claim upon the proceeds from property. Like factory workers—and day laborers, for that matter—they work for those who do own such means of livelihood.

Yet if bookkeepers and coal miners, insurance agents and farm laborers, doctors in a clinic and crane operators in an open pit have this condition in common, certainly their class situations are not the same. To understand their class positions, we must go beyond the common fact of source of income and consider as well the amount of income.

In 1890, the average income of white-collar occupational groups was about double that of wage-workers. Before World War I, salaries were not so adversely affected by slumps as wages were but, on the contrary, they rather steadily advanced. Since World War I, however, salaries have been reacting to turns in the economic cycles more and more like wages, although still to a lesser extent. If wars help wages more because of the greater flexibility of wages, slumps help salaries because of their greater inflexibility. Yet after each war era, salaries have never regained their previous advantage over wages. Each phase of the cycle, as well as the progressive rise of all income

groups, has resulted in a narrowing of the income gap between wage-workers and white-collar employees.

In the middle 'thirties the three urban strata, entrepreneurs, white-collar, and wage-workers, formed a distinct scale with respect to median family income: the white-collar employees had a median income of \$1896; the entrepreneurs, \$1464; the urban wage-workers, \$1175. Although the median income of white-collar workers was higher than that of the entrepreneurs, larger proportions of the entrepreneurs received both high-level and low-level incomes. The distribution of their income was spread more than that of the white collar.

The wartime boom in incomes, in fact, spread the incomes of all occupational groups, but not evenly. The spread occurred mainly among urban entrepreneurs. As an income level, the old middle class in the city is becoming less an evenly graded income group, and more a collection of different strata, with a large proportion of lumpen-bourgeoisie who receive very low incomes, and a small, prosperous bourgeoisie with very high incomes.

In the late 'forties (1948, median family income) the income of all white-collar workers was \$4000, that of all urban wage-workers, \$3300. These averages, however, should not obscure the overlap of specific groups within each stratum: the lower white-collar people—sales-employees and office workers—earned almost the same as skilled workers and foremen,<sup>1</sup> but more than semi-skilled urban wage-workers.

In terms of property, white-collar people are in the same position as wage-workers; in terms of occupational income, they are "somewhere in the middle." Once they were considerably above the wage-workers; they have become less so; in the middle of the century they still have an edge but the over-all rise in incomes is making the new middle class a more homogeneous income group.

As with income, so with prestige: white-collar groups are differentiated socially, perhaps more decisively than wage-workers and entrepreneurs. Wage earners certainly do form an income pyramid and a prestige gradation, as do entrepreneurs and rentiers; but the new middle class, in terms of income and prestige, is a superimposed pyramid, reaching from almost the bottom of the first to almost the top of the second.

People in white-collar occupations claim higher prestige than wage-workers,

<sup>1</sup> It is impossible to isolate the salaried foremen from the skilled urban wage-workers in these figures. If we could do so, the income of lower white-collar workers would be closer to that of semi-skilled workers.

and, as a general rule, can cash in their claims with wage-workers as well as with the anonymous public. This fact has been seized upon, with much justification, as the defining characteristic of the white-collar strata, and although there are definite indications in the United States of a decline in their prestige, still, on a nation-wide basis, the majority of even the lower white-collar employees—office workers and salespeople—enjoy a middling prestige.

The historic bases of the white-collar employees' prestige, apart from superior income, have included the similarity of their place and type of work to those of the old middle-classes' which has permitted them to borrow prestige. As their relations with entrepreneur and with esteemed customer have become more impersonal, they have borrowed prestige from the firm itself. The stylization of their appearance, in particular the fact that most white-collar jobs have permitted the wearing of street clothes on the job, has also figured in their prestige claims, as have the skills required in most white-collar jobs, and in many of them the variety of operations performed and the degree of autonomy exercised in deciding work procedures. Furthermore, the time taken to learn these skills and the way in which they have been acquired by formal education and by close contact with the higher-ups in charge has been important. White-collar employees have monopolized high school education—even in 1940 they had completed 12 grades to the 8 grades for wage-workers and entrepreneurs. They have also enjoyed status by descent: in terms of race, Negro white-collar employees exist only in isolated instances—and, more importantly, in terms of nativity, in 1930 only about 9 per cent of white-collar workers, but 16 per cent of free enterprisers and 21 per cent of wage-workers, were foreign born. Finally, as an underlying fact, the limited size of the white-collar group, compared to wage-workers, has led to successful claims to greater prestige.

The power position of groups and of individuals typically depends upon factors of class, status, and occupation, often in intricate interrelation. Given occupations involve specific powers over other people in the actual course of work; but also outside the job area, by virtue of their relations to institutions of property as well as the typical income they afford, occupations lend power. Some white-collar occupations require the direct exercise of supervision over other white-collar and wage-workers, and many more are closely attached to this managerial cadre. White-collar employees are the assistants of authority; the power they exercise is a derived power, but they do exercise it.

Moreover, within the white-collar pyramids there is a characteristic pattern of authority involving age and sex. The white-collar ranks contain a good many women: some 41 per cent of all white-collar employees, as compared with 10 per cent of free enterprisers, and 21 per cent of wage-workers, are women.<sup>2</sup> As with sex, so with age: free enterprisers average (median) about 45 years of age, white-collar and wage-workers, about 34; but among free enterprisers and wage-workers, men are about 2 or 3 years older than women; among white-collar workers, there is a 6- or 7-year difference. In the white-collar pyramids, authority is roughly graded by age and sex: younger women tend to be subordinated to older men.

The occupational groups forming the white-collar pyramids, different as they may be from one another, have certain common characteristics, which are central to the character of the new middle class as a general pyramid overlapping the entrepreneurs and wage-workers. White-collar people cannot be adequately defined along any one possible dimension of stratification—skill, function, class, status, or power. They are generally in the middle ranges on each of these dimensions and on every descriptive attribute. Their position is more definable in terms of their relative differences from other strata than in any absolute terms.

On all points of definition, it must be remembered that white-collar people are not one compact horizontal stratum. They do not fulfil one central, positive *function* that can define them, although in general their functions are similar to those of the old middle class. They deal with symbols and with other people, co-ordinating, recording, and distributing; but they fulfil these functions as dependent employees, and the skills they thus employ are sometimes similar in form and required mentality to those of many wage-workers.

In terms of property, they are equal to wage-workers and different from the old middle class. Originating as propertyless dependents, they have no serious expectations of propertied independence. In terms of income, their class position is, on the average, somewhat higher than that of wage-workers. The overlap is large and the trend has been definitely toward less difference, but even today the differences are significant.

Perhaps of more psychological importance is the fact that white-collar groups have successfully claimed more prestige than wage-workers and still

<sup>2</sup> According to our calculations, the proportions of women, 1940, in these groups are: farmers, 2.9%; businessmen, 20%; free professionals, 5.9%; managers, 7.1%; salaried professionals, 51.7%; salespeople, 27.5%; office workers, 51%; skilled workers, 3.2%; semi-skilled and unskilled, 29.8%; rural workers, 9.1%.



generally continue to do so. The bases of their prestige may not be solid today, and certainly they show no signs of being permanent; but, however vague and fragile, they continue to mark off white-collar people from wage-workers.

Members of white-collar occupations exercise a derived authority in the course of their work; moreover, compared to older hierarchies, the white-collar pyramids are youthful and feminine bureaucracies, within which youth, education, and American birth are emphasized at the wide base, where millions of office workers most clearly typify these differences between the new middle class and other occupational groups. White-collar masses, in turn, are managed by people who are more like the old middle class, having many of the social characteristics, if not the independence, of free enterprisers.

### *The New Middle Class, II*

Ever since the new middle class began numerically to displace the old, its political role has been an object of query and debate. The political question has been closely linked with another—that of the position of new middle-class occupations in modern stratification.

This linkage of politics and stratification was all the more to be expected inasmuch as the white-collar man as a sociological creature was first discovered by Marxian theoreticians in search of recruits for the proletarian movement. They expected that society would be polarized into class-conscious proletariat and bourgeoisie, that in their general decline the in-between layers would choose one side or the other—or at least keep out of the way of the major protagonists. Neither of these expectations, however, had been realized when socialist theoreticians and party bureaucrats began at the opening of the present century to tinker with the classic perspective.

In trying to line up the new population into those who could and those who could not be relied upon to support their struggle, party statisticians ran squarely into the numerical upsurge of the white-collar salariat. The rise of these groups as a problem for Marxists signaled a shift from the simple property versus no-property dichotomy to differentiations within the no-property groups. It focused attention upon occupational structure. Moreover, in examining white-collar groups, along with the persistent small entrepreneurs of farm and city, they came upon the further fact that although the new middle class was propertyless, and the smaller entrepreneurs often suffered economic downgrading, members of these strata did not readily take to the socialist ideology. Their political attachments did not coincide with

their economic position, and certainly not with their imminently expected position. They represented a numerical upthrust of falsely conscious people, and they were an obstacle to the scheduled course of the revolution.

#### I. THEORIES AND DIFFICULTIES

To relate in detail all the theories that followed upon these discoveries and speculations would be more monotonous than fruitful; the range of theory had been fairly well laid out by the middle 'twenties, and nothing really new has since been added. Various writers have come upon further detail, some of it crucial, or have variously combined the major positions, some of which have had stronger support than others. But the political directions that can be inferred from the existence of the new middle class may be sorted out into four major possibilities.

I. The new middle class, in whole or in some crucial segment, will continue to grow in numbers and in power; in due course it will develop into a politically independent class. Displacing other classes in performance of the pivotal functions required to run modern society, it is slated to be the next ruling class. The accent will be upon the new middle class; the next epoch will be theirs.

II. The new middle classes will continue to grow in numbers and power, and although they will not become a force that will rise to independent power, they will be a major force for stability in the general balance of the different classes. As important elements in the class balance, they will make for the continuance of liberal capitalist society. Their spread checks the creeping proletarianization; they act as a buffer between labor and capital. Taking over certain functions of the old middle class, but having connections with the wage-workers, they will be able to co-operate with them too; thus they bridge class contrasts and mitigate class conflicts. They are the balance wheel of class interests, the stabilizers, the social harmonizers. They are intermediaries of the new social solidarity that will put an end to class bickering. That is why they are catered to by any camp or movement that is on its way to electoral power, or, for that matter, attempted revolution.

III. Members of the new middle class, by their social character and political outlook, are really bourgeoisie and they will remain that. This is particularly apparent in the tendency of these groups to become status groups rather than mere economic classes. They will form, as in Nazi Germany, prime human

materials for conservative, for reactionary, and even for fascist, movements. They are natural allies and shock troops of the larger capitalist drive.

iv. The new middle class will follow the classic Marxian scheme: in due course, it will become homogeneous in all important respects with the proletariat and will come over to their socialist policy. In the meantime, it represents—for various reasons, which will be washed away in crises and decline—a case of delayed reaction. For in historical reality, the “new middle class” is merely a peculiar sort of new proletariat, having the same basic interests. With the intensification of the class struggle between the real classes of capitalist society, it will be swept into the proletarian ranks. A thin, upper layer may go over to the bourgeoisie, but it will not count in numbers or in power.

These various arguments are difficult to compare, first of all because they do not all include the same occupations under the catchword “new middle class.” When we consider the vague boundary lines of the white-collar world, we can easily understand why such an occupational salad invites so many conflicting theories and why general images of it are likely to differ. There is no one accepted word for them; white collar, salaried employee, new middle class are used interchangeably. During the historical span covered by different theories, the occupational groups composing these strata have changed; and at given times, different theorists in pursuit of bolstering data have spotlighted one or the other groups composing the total. So contrasting images of the political role of the white-collar people can readily exist side by side (and perhaps even both be correct). Those, for instance, who believe that as the vanguard stratum of modern society they are slated to be the next ruling class do not think of them as ten-cent store clerks, insurance-agents, and stenographers, but rather as higher technicians and staff engineers, as salaried managers of business cartels and big officials of the Federal Government. On the other hand, those who hold that they are being proletarianized do focus upon the mass of clerkings and sales people, while those who see their role as in-between mediators are most likely to include both upper and lower ranges. At any rate . . . we have split the stratum as a whole into at least four sub-strata or pyramids, and we must pay attention to this split as we try to place white-collar people in our political expectations.

Most of the work that has been done on the new middle class and its political role involves more general theories of the course of capitalist development. That is why it is difficult to sort out in a simple and yet systematic

way what given writers really think of the white-collar people. Their views are based not on an examination of this stratum as much as on, first, the political program they happen to be following; second, the doctrinal position, as regards the political line-up of classes, they have previously accepted; and third, their judgment in regard to the main course of twentieth-century industrial society.

Proletarian purists would disavow white-collar people; United Fronters would link at least segments of them with workers in a fight over specific issues, while carefully preserving organizational and, above all, doctrinal independence; People's Fronters would cater to them by modifying wage-worker ideology and program in order to unite the two; liberals of "Populist" inclination, in a sort of dogmatic pluralism, would call upon them along with small businessmen, small farmers, and all grades of wage-workers to coalesce. And each camp, if it prevailed long enough for its intellectuals to get into production, would evolve theories about the character of the white-collar people and the role they are capable of playing.

As for political doctrines, the very definition of the white-collar problem has usually assumed as given a more or less rigid framework of fated classes. The belief that in any future struggle between big business and labor, the weight of the white-collar workers will be decisive assumes that there is going to be a future struggle, in the open, between business and labor. The question of whether they will be either proletariat or bourgeoisie, thus in either case giving up whatever identity they may already have, or go their independent way, assumes that there are these other sides and that their struggle will, in fact if not in consciousness, make up the real political arena. Yet, at the same time, the theories to which the rise of the new middle class has given birth distinguish various, independent sectors of the proletariat and of the bourgeoisie, suggesting that the unit of analysis has been over-formalized. The problem of the new middle class must now be raised in a context that does not merely assume homogeneous blocs of classes.

The political argument over white-collar workers has gone on over an international scale. Although modern nations do have many trends in common—among them certainly the statistical increase of the white-collar workers—they also have unique features. In posing the question of the political role of white-collar people in the United States, we must learn all we can from discussions of them in other countries, the Weimar Republic especially, but in doing so, we must take everything hypothetically and test it against U.S. facts and trends.

The time-span of various theories and expectations, as we have noted, has



in most of the arguments not been closely specified. Those who hold the view that white-collar workers are really only an odd sort of proletariat and will, in due course, begin to behave accordingly, or the view that the new middle class is slated to be the next ruling class have worked with flexible and often conflicting schedules.

What has been at issue in these theories is the objective position of the new middle classes within and between the various strata of modern society, and the political content and direction of their mentality. Questions concerning either of these issues can be stated in such a way as to allow, and in fact demand, observational answers only if adequate conceptions of stratification and of political mentality are clearly set forth.

## 2. MENTALITIES

It is frequently asserted, in theories of the white-collar people, that there are no classes in the United States because "psychology is of the essence of classes" or, as Alfred Bingham has put it, that "class groupings are always nebulous, and in the last analysis only the vague thing called class-consciousness counts." It is said that people in the United States are not aware of themselves as members of classes, do not identify themselves with their appropriate economic level, do not often organize in terms of these brackets or vote along the lines they provide. America, in this reasoning, is a sand-heap of "middle-class individuals."

But this is to confuse psychological feelings with other kinds of social and economic reality. Because men are not "class conscious" at all times and in all places does not mean that "there are no classes" or that "in America everybody is middle class." The economic and social facts are one thing; psychological feelings may or may not be associated with them in expected ways. Both are important, and if psychological feelings and political outlooks do not correspond to economic class, we must try to find out why, rather than throw out the economic baby with the psychological bath, and so fail to understand how either fits into the national tub. No matter what people believe, class structure as an economic arrangement influences their life chances according to their positions in it. If they do not grasp the causes of their conduct this does not mean that the social analyst must ignore or deny them.

If political mentalities are not in line with objectively defined strata, that lack of correspondence is a problem to be explained; in fact, it is the grand problem of the psychology of social strata. The general problem of stratifica-

tion and political mentality has to do with the extent to which the members of objectively defined strata are homogeneous in their political alertness, outlook, and allegiances, and with the degree to which their political mentality and actions are in line with the interests demanded by the juxtaposition of their objective position and their accepted values.

To understand the occupation, class, and status positions of a set of people is not necessarily to know whether or not they (1) will become class-conscious, feeling that they belong together or that they can best realize their rational interests by combining; (2) will organize themselves, or be open to organization by others, into associations, movements, or political parties; (3) will have "collective attitudes" of any sort, including those toward themselves, their common situation; or (4) will become hostile toward other strata and struggle against them. These social, political, and psychological characteristics may or may not occur on the basis of similar objective situations. In any given case, such possibilities must be explored, and "subjective" attributes must not be used as criteria for class inclusion, but rather, as Max Weber has made clear, stated as probabilities on the basis of objectively defined situations.

Implicit in this way of stating the issues of stratification lies a model of social movements and political dynamics. The important differences among people are differences that shape their biographies and ideas; within any given stratum, of course, individuals differ, but if their stratum has been adequately understood, we can expect certain psychological traits to recur. The probability that people will have a similar mentality and ideology, and that they will join together for action, is increased the more homogeneous they are with respect to class, occupation, and prestige. Other factors do, of course, affect the probability that ideology, organization, and consciousness will occur among those in objectively similar strata. But psychological factors are likely to be associated with *strata*, which consist of people who are characterized by an intersection of the *several* dimensions we have been using: class, occupation, status, and power. The task is to sort out these dimensions of stratification in a systematic way, paying attention to each separately and then to its relation to each of the other dimensions.

The question whether the white-collar workers are a "new middle class," or a "new working class," or what not, is not entirely one of definition, but its empirical solution is made possible only by clarified definitions. The meaning of the term "proletarianized," around which the major theories have revolved, is by no means clear. In the definitions we have used, how-

ever, proletarianization might refer to shifts of middle-class occupations toward wage-workers in terms of: income, property, skill, prestige or power, irrespective of whether or not the people involved are aware of these changes. Or, the meaning may be in terms of changes in consciousness, outlook, or organized activity. It would be possible, for example, for a segment of the white-collar people to become virtually identical with wage-workers in income, property, and skill, but to resist being like them in prestige claims and to anchor their whole consciousness upon illusory prestige factors. Only by keeping objective position and ideological consciousness separate in analysis can the problem be stated with precision and without unjustifiable assumptions about wage-workers, white-collar workers, and the general psychology of social classes.

When the Marxist, Anton Pannekoek for example, refuses to include propertyless people of lower income than skilled workers in the proletariat, he refers to ideological and prestige factors. He does not go on to refer to the same factors as they operate among the "proletariat," because he holds to what can only be called a metaphysical belief that the proletariat is *destined* to win through to a certain consciousness. Those who see white-collar groups as composing an independent "class," *sui generis*, often use prestige or status as their defining criterion rather than economic level. The Marxian assertion, for example L. B. Boudin's, that salaried employees "are in reality just as much a part of the proletariat as the merest day-laborer," obviously rests on economic criteria, as is generally recognized when his statement is countered by the assertion that he ignores "important psychological factors."

The Marxist in his expectation assumes, first, that wage-workers, or at least large sections of them, do in fact, or will at any moment, have a socialist consciousness of their revolutionary role in modern history. He assumes, secondly, that the middle classes, or large sections of them, are acquiring this consciousness, and in this respect are becoming like the wage-workers or like what wage-workers are assumed to be. Third, he rests his contention primarily upon the assumption that the economic dimension, especially property, of stratification is the key one, and that it is in this dimension that the middle classes are becoming like wage-workers.

But the fact that propertyless employees (both wage-workers and salaried employees) have not automatically assumed a socialist posture clearly means that propertylessness is not the only factor, or even the crucial one, determining inner-consciousness or political will.

Neither white-collar people nor wage-workers have been or are preoccupied with questions of property. The concentration of property during the

last century has been a slow process rather than a sharp break inside the life span of one generation; even the sons and daughters of farmers—among whom the most obvious “expropriation” has gone on—have had their attentions focused on the urban lure rather than on urban propertylessness. As jobholders, moreover, salaried employees have generally, with the rest of the population, experienced a secular rise in standards of living: propertylessness has certainly not necessarily coincided with pauperization. So the centralization of property, with consequent expropriation, has not been widely experienced as “agony” or reacted to by proletarianization, in any psychological sense that may be given these terms.

Objectively, we have seen that the structural position of the white-collar mass is becoming more and more similar to that of the wage-workers. Both are, of course, propertyless, and their incomes draw closer and closer together. All the factors of their status position, which have enabled white-collar workers to set themselves apart from wage-workers, are now subject to definite decline. Increased rationalization is lowering the skill levels and making their work more and more factory-like. As high-school education becomes more universal among wage-workers, and the skills required for many white-collar tasks become simpler, it is clear that the white-collar job market will include more wage-worker children.

In the course of the next generation, a “social class” between lower white-collar and wage-workers will probably be formed, which means, in Weber’s terms, that between the two positions there will be a typical job mobility. This will not, of course, involve the professional strata or the higher managerial employees, but it will include the bulk of the workers in salesroom and office. These shifts in the occupational worlds of the propertyless are more important to them than the existing fact of their propertylessness.

### 3. ORGANIZATIONS

The assumption that political supremacy follows from functional, economic indispensability underlies all those theories that see the new middle class or any of its sections slated to be the next ruling class. For it is assumed that the class that is indispensable in fulfilling the major functions of the social order will be the next in the sequence of ruling classes. Max Weber in his essay on bureaucracy has made short shrift of this idea: “The ever-increasing ‘indispensability’ of the officialdom, swollen to millions, is no more decisive for this question [of power] than is the view of some representatives of the proletarian movement that the economic indispensability of the proletarians is decisive for the measure of their social and political power position.



If 'indispensability' were decisive, then where slave labor prevailed and where freemen usually abhor work as a dishonor, the 'indispensable' slaves ought to have held the positions of power, for they were at least as indispensable as officials and proletarians are today. Whether the power . . . as such increases cannot be decided *a priori* from such reasons."

Yet the assumption that it can runs all through the white-collar literature. Just as Marx, seeing the parasitical nature of the capitalist's endeavor, and the real function of work performed by the workers, predicted the workers' rise to power, so James Burnham (and before him Harold Lasswell, and before him John Corbin) assumes that since the new middle class is the carrier of those skills upon which modern society more and more depends, it will inevitably, in the course of time, assume political power. Technical and managerial indispensability is thus confused with the facts of power struggle, and overrides all other sources of power. The deficiency of such arguments must be realized positively: we need to develop and to use a more open and flexible model of the relations of political power and stratification.

Increasingly, class and status situations have been removed from free market forces and the persistence of tradition, and been subject to more formal rules. A government management of the class structure has become a major means of alleviating inequalities and insuring the risks of those in lower-income classes. Not so much free labor markets as the powers of pressure groups now shape the class positions and privileges of various strata in the United States. Hours and wages, vacations, income security through periods of sickness, accidents, unemployment, and old age—these are now subject to many intentional pressures, and, along with tax policies, transfer payments, tariffs, subsidies, price ceilings, wage freezes, et cetera, make up the content of "class fights" in the objective meaning of the phrase.

The "Welfare State" attempts to manage class chances without modifying basic class structure; in its several meanings and types, it favors economic policies designed to redistribute life-risks and life-chances in favor of those in the more exposed class situations, who have the power or threaten to accumulate the power, to do something about their case.

Labor union, farm bloc, and trade association dominate the political scene of the Welfare State as well as of the permanent war economy; contests within and between these blocs increasingly determine the position of various groups. The state, as a descriptive fact, is at the balanced intersection of such pressures, and increasingly the privileges and securities of various occupational strata depend upon the bold means of organized power.

It is often by these means that the objective position of white-collar and wage-worker becomes similar. The greatest difficulty with the Marxist expectation of proletarianization is that many changes pointing that way have not come about by a lowering of the white-collar position, but often more crucially by a raising of the wage-worker position.

The salary, as contrasted with the wage, has been a traditional hall-mark of white-collar employment. Although still of prestige value to many white-collar positions, the salary must now be taken as a tendency in most white-collar strata rather than a water-tight boundary of the white-collar worlds. The contrast has rested on differences in the time-span of payment, and thus in security of tenure, and in the possibilities to plan because of more secure expectations of income over longer periods of time. But, increasingly, companies put salaried workers, whose salary for some time in many places has been reduced for absences, on an hourly basis. And manual workers, represented by unions, are demanding and getting precisely the type of privileges once granted only white-collar people.

All along the line, it is from the side of the wage-workers that the contrast in privileges has been most obviously breaking down. It was the mass-production union of steel workers, not salaried employees, that precipitated a national economic debate over the issue of regularized employment; and white-collar people must often now fight for what is sometimes assumed to be their inherited privilege: a union of professionals, The Newspaper Guild, has to insist upon dismissal pay as a clause in its contracts.

Whatever past differences between white-collar and wage-workers with respect to income security, sick benefits, paid vacations, and working conditions, the major trend is now for these same advantages to be made available to factory workers. Pensions, especially since World War II, have been a major idea in collective bargaining, and it has been the wage-worker that has had bargaining power. Social insurance to cover work injuries and occupational diseases has gradually been replacing the common law of a century ago, which held the employee at personal fault for work injury and the employer's liability had to be proved in court by a damage suit. In so far as such laws exist, they legally shape the class chances of the manual worker up to a par with or above other strata. Both privileges and income level have been increasingly subject to the power pressures of unions and government, and there is every reason to believe that in the future this will be even more the case.

The accumulation of power by any stratum is dependent on a triangle of

factors: will and know-how, objective opportunity, and organization. The opportunity is limited by the group's structural position; the will is dependent upon the group's consciousness of its interests and ways of realizing them. And both structural position and consciousness interplay with organizations, which strengthen consciousness and are made politically relevant by structural position.

## ROBERT MICHELS

**A**MONG the many ideas advanced by Karl Marx, none has been more important, from the point of view of political action, than his conception of the historic role of the "proletariat." According to Marx, in measure as the proletariat swelled in numbers and became "conscious," not only of the fact of its exploitation, but of its mission as the instrument for the transformation of society into a classless brotherhood, the implicit antagonism between it and the class of capitalist owners would produce an organized struggle for power. Marx took industrial strife, in the form of strikes and lockouts, between employers and employees, as indicative of the crude beginnings of this "class struggle," and as prelude to the final revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist order.

Although Marx himself was aware of the many theoretical difficulties and ambiguities implicit in his conception, he was never able to offer a satisfactory analysis of the concrete conditions in which the "class consciousness" of the proletariat might arise. Nor were his basic definitions of class adequate to account for the actual development of the constantly changing class and status system of twentieth-century industrial society. Nonetheless, despite these and numerous other difficulties with the theory, Marx's opinions were not entirely without basis in fact. Particularly in Europe, some degree of distinct class consciousness did come to exist among certain large sectors of the industrial wage-earning population. This consciousness was often manifested in highly emotional and contagious anticapitalistic sentiments. It was as an attempt to elucidate the genesis of this proletarian class consciousness and of the anticapitalist feelings of large segments of the European masses that Robert Michels wrote, in 1926, his lengthy article "Psychologie der Antikapitalistischen Massenbewegungen," a partial translation of which, by Kurt Shell, comprises the following selection.

Robert Michels (1876-1936) was born in Cologne, Germany, and received a cosmopolitan education. Trained at numerous European universities and especially gifted as a linguist, he wrote fluently, not only in his native German but also in Italian and French. Attracted as a young man to the socialist movement, he entered upon an active career in the German Social Democratic Party. His experience there left a profound impression upon his thought. Turning from politics to academic life, he taught and lectured at the University of Turin in Italy and at the University of Basel in Switzerland from 1914 to 1928. In the latter year he accepted, upon invitation of Benito Mussolini, the position of professor of economics and sociology at Perugia University in Italy, in which post he remained until his death. Internationally known as an economist and social scientist, he was a prolific writer. But his best known work was also one of his earliest—*Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy*, which first appeared in German, in 1911.





## [THE ORIGINS OF ANTI-CAPITALISTIC MASS SPIRIT]

I. *The Factory*

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF "PSYCHOLOGICAL MASS" AND CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS

The shift from the handicraft and domestic system to large-scale factory enterprise, from manual to machine labor, engendered a psychological change which in the long run gave the labor force a new and quite specific character. Before the industrial revolution, the working force was atomised into innumerable tiny units; its most striking trait was its parochialism and narrow individualism with all the good and bad this implies. This was true even of those workers who were grouped together in crafts or guilds. These individuals or small economic bodies were pushed into temporary cooperation only by suddenly enflamed political or, more frequently, religious passions, or under extreme stress of serious economic crises.

The new mode of [factory] production first created the modern concept of the working mass. . . . [It] taught the proletarians to work together in one shop on one piece. It compelled the combination of innumerable small production units into a far smaller number of large-scale units. In addition, it created new plants which were large-scale enterprises from the start. It hounded workers into factory towns and forced them to perform identical tasks in huge shops. Those who had lived as peasants or domestic workers, or as artisans in small towns and small shops, now became a compact mass, through the manner of their work and the absolute homogeneity of their condition. This mass, spatially and spiritually compact, may be called "psychological mass."

Among the urbanized workers there now emerged the first intimations of a collective feeling of "belonging together." The machine became the center. This instrument demanded for its service a very large number of ever busy hands. The machine, one may say, is like a great general who gathers around him thousands of battle-ready soldiers in order to assign them their tasks. The machine brings about a militarization of the labor process, not only because it disciplines the dispersed individual units, but also because—in spite of the most thorough division of labor—it orients them towards the achievement of the single goal of maximum production. The mechanized enterprise thus creates a form of industrial cooperation which, in the purely technical realm, leads, without question, to a high degree of solidarity despite

---

This selection has been translated from Robert Michels, "Psychologie der Antikapitalistischen Massenbewegungen," *Grundriss der Sozialökonomie*, Vol. II, Part II (1926), pp. 244-281.

all the conflicts which it stimulates in the economic sphere between the managerial and capitalistic elements on the one hand and the wage-receiving element in the enterprise on the other. In other words: The human material of the "factory," while without a common interest in the distribution of income derived from production does, however, share an interest in the technical process of production itself.

The mechanized large-scale factory operates like a model school of solidarity on the tightly concentrated working force, united on the floor of the factory in identical tasks around identical tools. This solidarity is, at first, necessarily restricted to the work process. After finishing its daily stint the working mass of the large-scale enterprise dissolves into its innumerable molecules. When the gates of the factory close in the evening, solidarity is at an end. Individuality with its particularizing influences once more resumes its old and rightful place. However, when early next morning the heavy gates swing open once again, the iron duty of solidarity begins anew. The steady, systematic, eternal repetition of this process; the eternal close contact of working side by side to which the individuals are exposed in the factory; the ease with which workers get to know each other and talk to each other created by this process (on the way home or in the saloons); these encourage in the workers' soul the growth of a new feeling which is based no longer solely on technological, but also on economic, solidarity. One may say: Solidarity, the consciousness of belonging together, is transferred from the production process of labor into the spiritual life of the proletariat. When in the evening the shrill factory whistle sounds the worker now carries a feeling of identity of interests shared with his fellow workers from the giant plant along into his own home. Thus the modern production process itself embeds in the mentality of the proletarian the seed of that complicated and curious plant designated by the social psychologist as Class Consciousness. . . .

#### ISOLATION OF THE MASSES BY THEIR SPATIAL SEPARATION FROM THE EMPLOYER

While the workers were thus molded into a unit they were on the other hand, separated from the employer. First to disappear was the community home, residence at the same hearth. Then there disappeared the work community, the working together on the same piece or at least in the same room. In the mechanized, large-scale enterprise the entrepreneur lost his previous character as fellow worker. . . . Control over output was now entrusted to intermediaries. The entrepreneur became invisible to his workers. He was

banished into closed-off, not always easily accessible offices. . . . He became a stranger to his workers with whom he no longer had anything in common beyond the labor contract. . . . The relationship between employer and employee was depersonalized, materialized. Some employers requested that their workers not greet them any longer in the street. Others demanded the workers' greeting but refused to return the salutation.

Already before the middle of the last century one could say that the only entrepreneurs who were interested in the personal fortune of their workers, apart from a few very large manufacturers whose great means permitted them philanthropic feelings, were the very small manufacturers who remained in the old patriarchal traditions of communal living. The relationship of workers to the overwhelming number of entrepreneurs was objectified. Between employee and employer the only connecting link left was the cash nexus. . . .

Thus the spatial separation of home and work through the relocation of the place of work and the differentiation of labor acted to divide, that is, to create new, classes. This phenomenon is complementary to the emerging solidarity of a shared way of life. There can be no doubt that the gradual disappearance of the employer from the shop floor and from the social horizon of the wage earners, contributed to the emergence of a special proletarian class.

The class division [thus] brought about . . . paid little attention to the Saint-Simonian formula of class unity among producers, be they entrepreneurs or workers. To the wage worker the invisible and remote financier and capitalist were mythical personalities; his rage was directed quite concretely against the visible, tangible factory owner whose villa he saw before his eyes and whose method of enrichment he recognized by perceptible symptoms. It was the factory owner and *not* the financier living on unearned income who became for the worker the tormentor and exploiter, even though the worker saw that the owner also worked—sometimes the office lights burned far into the night.

At first, this separation did not lead to hatred, only to estrangement. The worker's hatred was reserved for the representative of the entrepreneur at the place of work, the foreman. Opposition to the employer was sharper rather than weaker if he himself had come from the ranks of the proletariat. Especially the proletarian turned factory owner (in France or England) was not distinguished by his humane reputation. In the latter case the worker did not even feel that natural respect which the lowborn had had for the highborn,

An equalizing, class-unifying element is present where the manner of living is equal or at least similar, even when other characteristics, such as property, income, and profession are and remain heterogeneous. This is particularly true when this living in similar style proceeds in the same space, when therefore one can speak of a common life, of a living-together. During the French Revolution a struggle broke out almost immediately in almost all the realm's provinces between the landowning aristocracy and the small leaseholders and tenant farmers which led to the destruction of the manor houses and, finally, to the expropriation of the landed aristocracy and the partition of their estates. But in the Vendée, gentry and peasantry only closed ranks more tightly in a common defence of the monarchy against the Republic. One of the main reasons for the solidarity characterizing this latter case, according to the Marquis de Vaissière, may be found in the fact that absentee ownership was less prevalent among the gentry of the Vendée than in the rest of France. There in the Vendée the gentlemen worked their own fields, and participated in the feasts and carousals of the peasants and even invited them occasionally in a sociable manner to a visit at their manor houses.

Occasionally even the mere presence of certain outwardly common features creates a certain degree of internal solidarity between classes. In the period between the publication of Adam Smith's *Inquiry into the Wealth of Nations* and the rise of the Chartist movement, German and Italian visitors to England were struck . . . by the uniformity of dress exhibited by Englishmen of all classes. Differentiation between classes, particularly on Sundays, was hardly noticeable. There were those who saw in the dress-democracy of Englishmen and the feeling of community deriving from it one of the reasons for the fact that the English social classes were not touched by the fever of the French Revolution. It must be remarked, however, that common manner of living, not to speak of common fashion and dress, alone are by no means sufficient to bridge class differences. Upon closer analysis of the factual relationships it becomes clear that this common manner of living usually is conditioned by other features, such as similarity of profession, distribution pattern, and education, which tend to overcome inequalities of psychological if not economic weight. The *gentilhomme campagnard*<sup>1</sup> and the *paysan*<sup>2</sup> are both members of the farmer group. . . .

The sharing of meals is today a characteristic of class membership. At the table classes divide. Those who by habit sit down to table with each other

<sup>1</sup> [Country gentleman.]

<sup>2</sup> [Peasant.]



or invite each other to meals, belong to the same social class. Members of different classes do not associate socially with each other any more, at least not in their homes. In the domestic structure itself this division has taken place creating the same result by giving rise to class distinctions. The patriarchally shared table gave way to the banishment of the servants from the family's living room. The household members divide themselves at meal time according to their class membership. The master and mistress of the house eat in the dining room, the servants in the kitchen. The sharing of meals by master and servant at the long table of patriarchalism is a dying institution.

To the loosening spatial labor community must be added the loosening geographical community of habitation, operating in the same direction.

We may disregard . . . the suddenly rising factory town. While it represents a tremendous concentration in labor and habitation space, it is not of an exclusively proletarian nature and, more important, does not represent the segregation of the proletarian element from the rest of the population. The owners and managers of the industries are co-inhabitants of the city.

On the other hand, attention must be directed at the growth of workers' quarters, for there the proletarian element is to be found in almost complete isolation.

The peripheral location of factories within the urban area is conditioned not so much by the change of the city's core into an office and amusement center with corresponding weakening of the dormitory element and the movement of workshops from center to periphery; rather, to a much greater extent, it is due to the fact that factories were constructed, from the very start, at the urban periphery, drawing upon human material coming from the country, i.e., from the outside. At first factory location was tied to rivers by the technological reliance on water power. Factories were, therefore, located along river banks in the country. . . . [Steam] power emancipated the factories from . . . rivers and permitted establishment of plants at the very edge of the towns. Thus there arose the workers' suburb, the *Faubourg Ouvrier*, which was separated from the start by its peripheral location from the living quarters of the other classes of the population. The uniformity of these workers' quarters was only increased by their ugliness and accented by their lack of variety. No churches, no parks, no fountains, no squares, no statues! . . .

The misery, the unwholesomeness, and the dirt soon beginning to accumulate were not, however, the primary factors tending to create class consciousness. The workers' dwellings in the preindustrial era were superior to

the later ones in only one respect: they had a more petty bourgeois character. The workers were emotionally attached even to their miserable furnishings. The bleakness of the modern factory hall, its nakedness, may very well be a secretly guilty contributor to the rise of modern class consciousness. . . .

This growth of workers' quarters seems to have led to protests on the part of the inhabitants themselves. Should the workers of a democratic state permit themselves to be crowded together in special streets and quarters similar to the ghetti which had just been abolished, apart from the homes of their fellow citizens and avoided by them? Was this not directly contrary to the dignity of the citizen and the equality of man? Even the opposition did not view the growth of workers' quarters with favor. They realized the political danger inherent in the crowding together of masses of men left to themselves. . . .

The first form which workers' houses took under modern industrialism was . . . the barrack-like tenement building. This, at least, is true of many parts of Germany, France, Italy, and other countries on the Continent. It has been said:

In Germany the greatest concentration of population, the highest average density of dwellings, is to be found in the suburbs, i.e., in the newly built-up city areas. The tenement houses with the most intensive crowding of inhabitants developed not on the scarce, highly priced real estate of the city centers, but rather on the plentiful land open to urban development. It is just these newly built-up districts with their plentiful, naturally most inexpensive ground which offer the greatest difficulties to building development. According to natural, economic laws the curve of suburban building should flatten out, just as the curve of ground rent flattens out.

Development of the new workers' dwellings was, of course, not restricted to private or speculative building activity. The employers themselves, for reasons which ranged from considerations of utility and power on one hand to pure charity on the other, either themselves built or supported the building of individual homes for their workers, usually in the immediate vicinity of the plant. The fact of the local segregation of the labor force and its separation from the residential quarters of the rich remained. It mattered little whether the workers rented their dwelling, which subjected them to the capitalist in his double capacity of factory owner and landlord, or whether they, through paying installments, had acquired the status and dignity of property ownership.

The same is true of the workers' one-family house. Indeed, it was particularly in this type of dwelling that the mass character of proletarian living was frequently intensified. Workers, in order to be in a position to buy the

homes from the company, shared them with one or even two other tenants, although the houses had been built and designed for only one family. . . . The average space per person in the workers' quarter of Lille in 1826 was found to be 8 square meters.

Thus the new type of housing was responsible for the formation of classes, firstly, by crowding workers into the smallest possible spaces, which was due, in part, to the increase of ground rent; but even more generally by the element of segregation. . . .

Besides the crowding together of the healthy there is the lying together of the sick. The mass character of the proletariat comes to the fore also in the mass hospitals, particularly in view of the notable ease—quite in contrast to traditional attitudes—with which members of the working class now decide to enter the hospital when ill, almost as if they craved to live through all aspects of existence *en masse*. This trait was already noted around the middle of the last century in Manchester as well as in Paris.

Modern industrial workers . . . who "do not own more property than they can carry on a wheelbarrow" . . . can make their wills count only if they unite. Only the common will of the workers is capable of standing up against the single will of the capitalist. They understood that their basis, the mass movement, must rest on the principle of cooperation. As Engels said: "The development of views and ideas peculiar to the workers and their position in life goes forward . . . and the workers acquire social and political importance. The large cities are the breeding ground for the workers' movement. There the workers have first started to think about their situation and to fight against it."

One must not conclude, however, that lasting and effective socialist ideals of communal living or communal housekeeping will necessarily emerge from the narrowly crowded conditions under which the modern urban worker lives. Crowding in the tenement with its many frictional situations gives rise to feelings far different from community spirit. It tends only to increase conflicts and, among neighbors, personal incompatibilities. The developing phenomenon may be compared to the "barbed-wire sickness" of the prisoner of war camps observed during World War [I], where irritability, induced by too narrow confinement, increased to the point of persecution mania and created in the victim an ardent desire for isolation and solitude. Nor have the much advertised housekeeping collectives been able to take root even in large cities, in spite of the economic advantages which wholesale purchasing and savings in time, effort, and cost seem to offer.

Psychologically, Fourier's idea of living at close quarters in his producer

and consumers' cooperatives was fallacious, even though economically perhaps correct. Man does not like to live like the bee in hives, but rather like the bird, in a nest. But even this domestic, monogamous nest-psychology was weakened by the pre-war development of so-called "personalism," a movement which spread also to the ranks of the better paid workers. Even in working-class circles an occasionally strong current of thought vindicated the right of the worker's wife to her own living room or her own bedroom. Every person, so it was argued, must have a room of his or her own, where action and will could be unrestricted. This tendency was, however, nationally conditioned. In Italy even the bourgeoisie felt it to be excessively frigid and contrary to the basic requirement of marriage. In Germany particularly, however, and especially after 1870, there developed "residential luxury which extended, in part, even to the working class and which left not only older countries like France, but also younger ones like America far behind." In other ways as well the crowded living conditions of the proletariat and its desire for physical as well as spiritual breathing space rather created a centrifugal urge. The family disintegrates. Longing for "free living" is everywhere noticeable: the young woman worker leaves the parental home, makes herself independent, moves partly to escape supervision, partly to avoid the absorption of her own wage into the general family budget. Even in patriarchal Italy the traces of such a development can be discovered. On the other hand, it has been observed that the gainfully employed members of the family as a rule receive maintenance from the mother of the family differing in proportion with their contribution to the common family budget.

## *II. Criteria for a Definition of the Proletarian Class*

### DIVISION OF SOCIETY INTO WORKERS AND NONWORKERS

The division of social classes into workers and nonworkers is a very old one. While it may have its origin in an economic criterion, the production factor of human labor, it easily leads to more broadly based ethical considerations. The lines of division between worker and nonworker are very vague in nature. Sufficient proof of this are the theoretical writings of our classic authors about the classification of the so-called performers of social services, the productive and unproductive strata, etc. There exist also kinds and methods of work which to the untrained or spiteful observer may appear as pure loafing. In many mental and artistic occupations the period of visible effort presupposes long previous periods of incubation during which the watcher does not perceive any perceptible performance of work by the



working person. The *longue et douce rêverie*,<sup>3</sup> in a hammock if you will, the seemingly leisurely travel from country to country and among various peoples, have frequently been mere overtures to many a masterpiece produced by human effort and energy.

We might remark, by the way, that even the complete absence of occupational labor, expressed in the economic realm by unearned income as the means of livelihood, cannot in all instances be considered as harmful to society and therefore does not permit final judgment based on ethical, not to speak of eudaemonistic, considerations.

For it is from this field of unemployment that the Maecenas has sprung and many a time the unafraid, assured, because economically independent, idealistic honorific statesman. This is primarily true of the rural form of absentee ownership (absence of the legal owner from the actual duties of management; living at a different place on the proceeds of the ground rent), but is also valid where absentee ownership is present in industry, trade, and commerce, as in the modern form of enterprise, the stock company.

Anyway, modern statistics attempting to measure labor effort are quite helpless when faced with some categories of persons. It does not know what to do with housewives and their economic contribution. It assigns them to various categories such as occupationless family members, occupationless independent persons. . . . Influential statisticians like Rauchberg base their opinion that housework represents no proper occupation on the reason that it derives its income from the income of the gainfully employed member of the household without being rewarded in its own right; the criterion determining occupation they hold to be the position in the labor division of the economy and the participation in the social production of material and immaterial goods. It is, however, a thoroughly fallacious assumption that the housewife exercises merely an economically passive function. Admittedly she is exclusively a consumer, but only in the sense that consumption represents the last step in the process of production which gives goods its final form.

#### THE DOCTRINE OF THE UNEARNED INCOME

The postulate of the right to the full value of one's work belongs in its origin to the French and English natural-law doctrine of the middle of the 18th century. Traces of this viewpoint can, however, already be discovered in Mercantilism. Jean Baptiste Colbert advised his king to consider his peo-

<sup>3</sup> [*Long and sweet reverie.*]

ple as divided into two classes, those who tended to shirk labor, and those who contribute to the general welfare by their industrious lives. Among the first, Colbert counted the leisured part of the aristocracy and probably a large number of monks and nuns. Among the latter, quite in the mercantilist fashion, soldiers, merchants, peasants, and day laborers. For the former the state should make life as difficult as possible, but ease it for the latter and honor them. It was only one step from this viewpoint to the assertion of the right to the full value of one's labor. During the first decades of the 19th century the assumption of the presence or absence of unearned income became the center of the teaching about social classes. Already in the *Globe*, Prosper Enfantin (1831) stressed the decisive class contrast between those who lived on the return of their own labor and those who lived on the return of the labor of others. With him and the whole school of Saint-Simon class difference is based on division between workers and idlers. Both classes are seemingly also divided into some subdivisions. The idlers, also called bourgeois—the definition of bourgeois is: the bourgeois lives on the work of others—live on rent or interest. This class was to be heavily taxed. The workers, also called producers, comprised three categories, artists, scientists, and industrialists. The function of the first is to improve mankind, of the second to teach it, the third to enrich it. The class of industrialists, in turn, included wage workers as well as plant owner-managers. Jean B. Say, the political economist and follower of Smith, also lists entrepreneurs, workers, and inventors in one class, that of the industrialist.

The criterion of unearned income, however, breaks down even the social unity of the proletariat. Enfantin had already differentiated between the active worker and the retired worker who lives (and has the right to live) on a pension. He obviously refers to the worker or artisan living on savings made from his labor. In this case group stratification would roughly correspond to age stratification. There exists, however, also a category of the poor who live without any work, regardless of the person's age. Those are the parasitical segments in the lower classes, *Lumpenproletariat*, the so-called *classes dangereuses*, vagabonds, and scum fearing the light of day. They correspond, measured by the criterion of labor, to the idlers among the capitalists. Their existence should confirm the thesis that the degree of labor effort is irrelevant to the formation of culture or ownership classes. For the lowest contribution of production labor is specifically found in the two extreme classes of the highest and lowest incomes, the millionaires and the scavengers. The findings of some social investigators around the middle of the last century

pointed in the same direction. They stated that the manufacturing poor, the industrial workers, at times found themselves in a worse position, suffering greater need, than the paupers who were supported by relief payments.

The fallacy of using unearned income as the exclusive criterion for class differentiation was, however, soon recognized. At least a third class interposed itself visibly between the other two, one which synthetically lived both on unearned income as well as labor effort. Thus the follower of Owen, Edmonds, in 1828 differentiates between wages (every labor rent) and revenue which he equates with unearned income: revenue is what costs the receiver no labor; it is generally derived from property in land, houses, money, machinery, etc., but he remarks expressly: the income of every individual is either in revenue or wages or both. It is well known that later, particularly after 1880 and in England, the extraordinary spread of stock corporations and low-cost shares turned a large number of wage workers "in their private lives" into stockholders and thus into recipients of unearned income. However, the realization of this development remained sporadic and did no harm worth mentioning to the propagandistic exploitation of the idea of class differentiation according to earned or unearned income.

Thus the criterion of the presence or absence of unearned income divides the two great economic classes, but it divides them, one might say, without in turn defining the entities uniformly. Or, to put it more accurately, it defines them rather quantitatively, according to the *degree* of the unearned income component present.

#### DIVISION OF SOCIETY INTO WAGE LABOR AND INDEPENDENTS

The most realistic class theory bases itself on the position of the individual in the productive process itself.

The two-class theory was originated, as far as I have been able to learn, by the great Neapolitan jurist Duca Gaetano Filangieri (1780). According to him, society is divided into two classes, the *proprietari* (proprietors) and the *proletari mercenari* (wage workers), the latter extraordinarily numerous, the former numerically very small, and the small owners far outweighing the large estate owners in number. In other words: the number of members in each of the classes stands in reverse proportion to their property.

In 1803 two different attempts at a novel class differentiation were published by French authors. From Geneva Count Saint-Simon writes his *Lettre d'un Habitant de Genève à ses Contemporains*.<sup>4</sup> It divides mankind into three classes: sages, owners, and masses. The first is to have spiritual, the

<sup>4</sup> [Letter from a Resident of Geneva to His Contemporaries.]

second temporal power; the third was to choose between these two. Jean Baptiste Say in his *Traité d'Economie Politique*<sup>5</sup> also presents a three-class theory. But he connects the three classes of human society to the three factors of production: 1. Knowledge of the natural laws necessary for production results in the class of sages (*savants*). 2. Utilization and exploitation of this knowledge for the purpose of producing consumer goods result in the class of agriculturalists, manufacturers, and merchants. 3. The working class arises as the organ executing the orders given by the first two classes. Among the examples provided for us by Say we select one: indigo. The geographer, the world traveler, the astronomer, indicate the location where indigo can be found and make it possible to cross the oceans to get hold of it (1st class); the merchant builds a ship and takes the risk of transportation (2nd class); the sailor and carter contribute their physical effort to the acquisition of indigo (3rd class).

Saint-Simonians, however, by no means lose sight of the fact that differences in income level divide the great working class socially. They even bring out the economic-political contrasts between the two types. Thus the entrepreneur becomes the worker-proprietor whose interests do not coincide with those of his fellow class member, the worker, but rather push him toward solidarity with the idler-proprietors with whom he shares the fear of economic damage due to the insubordination of wage labor. Say also noticed a division within the industrious class, pointing out that opposition existed not only between consumers and producers but also between workers and employers.

Say, too, already recognizes the existence of subclasses. He was probably the first to define for us a class of entrepreneurs without, however, always sharply differentiating it from that of capitalists. This is the class of *entrepreneurs d'industrie*,<sup>6</sup> whose duty it is to draw practical conclusions for the useful application of the scientific discoveries. . . . In Say's writings interest on capital and labor effort already appear as the bases of entrepreneurial profit. Adam Smith, and similarly J. S. Mill, still lump both types of revenue together under the term profits of stock. As early as 1848 the latter defended the two-class theory which he constructed according to the criterion of manual labor. Mill expresses it with all clarity: in the case of manufacturing industry there never are more than two classes, the laborers and the capitalists. And in another place: the distinction is now fully established between the class of capitalists, or employers of labor, and the class of laborers; the capi-

<sup>5</sup> [*Treatise on Political Economy.*]

<sup>6</sup> [*Industrial entrepreneurs.*]



talists, in general, contributing no other labor than that of direction and superintendence. Thus Mill, too, does not seem to differentiate the functions of the capitalist and the entrepreneur.

The bourgeoisie first consisted of craftsmen, merchants, traders, house-owners, and financiers. Only later were bourgeois scientists and intellectuals included. Gradually the opposition to the aristocracy moved into the background to make place for the opposition to the *Quatrième Etat*.<sup>7</sup> For a long time, however, the bourgeoisie still preserved petty bourgeois features. We are still distant from the type of entrepreneur who developed later. . . .

Marxists have never defined the concept of class unambiguously. Marx, in the third volume of *Das Kapital*, sketched, but only in a fragmentary manner, an investigation into this concept. According to him class consists of groups sharing "identity of incomes and income sources." The revolutionary change in the means of production with its creation of a mass proletariat seemed to simplify the task of social classification. In the writings of Marx, and even more so in the writings of the Marxists, classes are essentially divided according to their juridical relationship to the socially necessary means of production, thus into owners and nonowners. This resulted in a simplification of grouping which culminated in the theoretical formula of the two classes: here bourgeoisie, there proletariat.

The partition of society into bourgeoisie and proletariat, owners and non-owners, corresponded at all times to reality in only a rough manner. It proves first of all insufficient for class relationships on the land. Agrarian life is characterized by the rich diversification of conditions of ownership and management. In many parts "hybrids" are as a matter of fact in the majority, fulfilling simultaneously or alternately the functions of employer and employee.

Out of the abundance of available material we will present two instances.

In Italy land ownership is in many parts excessively fragmented, so that it fails to provide sustenance for the owner and his family. The owner is, therefore, forced to offer his, or at least, his family members' services as wage laborer on the large estates; or, during the rice season in the Po Valley, when a particularly large labor force is required, to allow his half-grown children to migrate into the rice fields as helpers, in order to increase the family's income.

The small peasant is, therefore, simultaneously, a dependent wage worker.

The Irish cottiers are (and were) small tenant farmers who lease their cottage and land for a certain price which they do not have to pay in cash

<sup>7</sup> [*Fourth Estate*.]

but rather in produce of the rented land. If the harvest is bad they incur a debt with the owner of the land and must at a later date turn over to him any surplus to make up for it. As demand for rentable land, due to the great overpopulation, is tremendous, the rent is driven to such a high level that cottiers can make ends meet only in the very best years. While forced to bear the risks of an independent farmer they are incapable, except in a few rare cases, to raise their economic situation above the very lowest possible level.

The Marxist division of society into a minority of owners of the means of production and "bread givers" and a majority of men depending on the owners of the means of production became, in the course of time, inapplicable even to industry, due to the rise of the so-called new middle class, the industrial officialdom and paid industrial managers. The income level of certain wage recipients thus towered not only above the levels of other wage recipients but even above that of the average person *paying* wages. The criterion of finding the essence of class in ownership or nonownership of the means of production contradicted the income criterion as soon as the members of the wage-receiving class had to be assigned to different income classes, and some of them approached even the highest income levels. It became quite impossible for social science to assign the stone-breaker or thatcher to the same social class as the wage-receiving director of Krupp, with his annual pre-war income of 40,000 marks, dependent on the will of the (single or multiple) entrepreneur as the owner of the means of production, or the French [department store executive] with his income equal to that of the President of the Republic. The social span proved too wide to permit uniform class definition on the sole basis of relationship to ownership of the means of production.

The criterion in question would, in any case, fail to allow for one group: those who neither depend on means of production possessed by others nor employ others using means of production owned by them. This, admittedly, comprises only a small and decreasing group of entrepreneurs working as single economic units, such as independent merchants, traders, domestic workers, and artisans; in agriculture perhaps small peasant owners in whose case, as previously mentioned, usually other factors enter. These groups of individuals who stand in the middle between the proletariat of the propertyless and the bourgeoisie of the propertied form in reality the middle class, the petty bourgeoisie.

### *III. Subjective Awareness: Lifetime Membership in an Economic Class*

The tight organization of social classes is greatly weakened where individuals in their economic capacity are only transitory members of such a class and where movement from class to class is easy. This is particularly true when there exist expectations or, at least, hopes based on a fair degree of probability for social betterment within the foreseeable future. In such instances the socially lower position represents merely one rung in a ladder, one period (youth) in the span of human life. In Prussia, in 1828, according to Rau, the ratio of apprentices in the ten largest towns was 1,600 to 1,000 master-craftsmen, in 30 larger towns 1,051, in the remaining towns 639, in the country 291, altogether therefore 527 apprentices to every 1,000 master-craftsmen. These figures permit one to state without exaggeration that almost this entire minority of dependent individuals eventually moved into the positions of the independent majority. Those were the times when, to use a sociological hyperbole, apprenticeship ended with marriage to the boss's daughter. Today's servant group frequently does not fall within the strict definition of class, as a large percentage merely go into service in order to return to peasant or farm life via marriage or the parents' home once the art of housekeeping and refined city manners have been acquired. In Switzerland the institution of the "Saaltochter" in the restaurant business is proof that even the daughters of the possessing classes may go through periods of service. Military organization, too, has its transitional arrangements. The titled cadet-aspirant who joined a Prussian guard regiment as a noncommissioned officer belonged to the class of noncommissioned officers only nominally, but in reality was a member of the officer class. In most other standing armies parallel institutions of officer candidates exist. Service begins on the barracks floor, but the barracks floor serves as a spring board.

The intelligentsia is a special chapter from our point of view. It represents an educated class which can, however, be measured only by school performance, i.e., by achievements in examinations and of degrees. Economically it has no clear shape. The intellectual class is dispersed over all occupational and possessing classes. Its economic intangibility and dislocation make its organization impossible. Organization of the brainworker which today is being attempted everywhere must, therefore, remain a pious hope. Only a few types of intellectual training create a high degree of homogeneity and lead to identical occupational classes. (Particularly when they receive reward in form of fixed salaries, such as civil servants with university education.)

In this case their express economic status is specifically due to their intellect. These subclasses or class fragments are also more susceptible to organization. Of other intellectuals one may only say that, firstly, they have proved by the investment of capital (time and money) they have made in their studies (this leaves out, of course, recipients of grants) that they do not come from the propertyless classes (which does not exclude the possibility that their capital investment was based on false speculation); secondly, that they essentially tend in the direction of higher income classes. Those intellectuals coming from the upper classes who fail to reach their goal are retrospectively designated as declassed. They have been lost to their origin (birth). The connections between possession and education are logically and empirically beyond doubt. Yet one can not ascribe to the various classes any certain measure of culture as an inherent quality or by-product. Thus training, education, quick perception, and intelligence are not subject to differentiation along class lines. They occur in all income and property classes, even though in different quantities. Where educated individuals belong to the lower strata they are also designated as intellectual proletariat. These elements consist, however, frequently of men expecting—and sure of—socio-economic elevation. In this case they form a transition of one class and the corresponding characteristics must then be ascribed to them. Often, however, they become impatient or have rashly given up all hope for improvement and then run the danger of being absorbed by the lower classes. Then the impecunious intellectuals enter into conscious opposition to those educated persons who have means. They make the supreme effort. They make up the yeast of all social revolutions and become the vocational spokesmen of the masses in the class struggle. This struggle then appears as the fight between two classes of economically differentiated intellectuals for power. Strictly speaking, the term social class can only be used when membership in a class lasts for life, when an individual's birth and death take place within the same class, and when the occupational effort of a person can not break through the given class restrictions. That is why the emergence of a lifelong proletariat, caused by machine technology and large-scale enterprise, marked by the characteristic of its immutability, has become, at least in part, responsible for the relative compactness of this class. The most typical class is—in spite of everything—without doubt the modern factory proletariat, also because in its case occupational class, property class, and salary class closely approximate each other even if they do not coincide.

Much is gained for the understanding of all social movements and the rise of modern class consciousness if one holds on to the realization that it



was the almost complete impossibility of moving from the class of wage workers to that of the owners of the modern means of production which completed the process of their growth. This impossibility was not caused by industrialism as such—for Millar, a personal pupil of Adam Smith, quite justifiably claims that industry much more than agriculture has facilitated social advancement to the possessors of small purses—but rather was caused by machine technology and its concomitants. It is the condemnation of the wage worker to his lifetime membership in the proletariat which is the firmest glue creating class consciousness and the resulting rejection and ethical condemnation of the bourgeois order on the part of the condemned.

An indication of the correctness of the assertion that the consciousness of being condemned to lifelong wage labor is one of the strongest stimuli to the growth of anticapitalist mass movements of the present day can be found in the empirically shown fact that these movements are lacking where the workers maintain the hope, well-founded or not, that they will be able in some way or other, to rise in the course of their lives into the ranks of the owning class. As long as there was free land available in America wages remained at a high level because this was the only way that the entrepreneurs could prevent the departure of their labor force. Where every home-minded worker had the opportunity to migrate and by purchase or lease of a farm to become his own master, mass movements did not assume an anti-capitalistic character.

In northern France, as late as 1836, most industrialists had risen from the ranks of labor. They had made their fortunes in the first years of the restoration period (after 1815). . . . The same opportunity did not exist for the new generation. In England, too, during the first phase of large-scale industrialization, factory owners and inventors had come primarily from the people (e.g., Arkwright, Peel, Strutt, Ashton, Cobden). This process ceased completely, however, around the middle of the century. Less than four decades later F. A. Lange reports on the basis of careful investigation of the factual material concerning German-speaking areas that chance, luck, and daring still benefited a few workers and permitted them to become entrepreneurs in their own right, but that the biographies of workers who had become rich proved that "it was never the small saved capital which, by continued application and saving, had been turned into large capital." In America, where this process set in later, the type of the self-made man—though by no means always coming from the ranks of the proletariat proper—predominated for a much longer period but tended to disappear with the progressive trustification of industry. In Italy, where development towards

large-scale industry began even later, Einaudi states that in Biellese the masters of industry by 1897 were no longer recruited from the ranks of self-made men.

The consciousness of the fixed nature of its position on the part of the proletariat dates far back. In France it can already be found in Considérant and Proudhon. Even the official representatives of a *Paix Sociale*<sup>8</sup> under Napoleon III had to admit that wage labor was the permanent state of a certain part of the population. The complementary formation of a firm lifelong class unity by the wellborn only rendered the fate of the proletarians all the darker.

The lifelong nature of the proletarian class position today has only a few exceptions. Factory production which forces the laborer to limit his work to a part of the product is poor preparation for the assumption of more difficult tasks. Even the purchase of his own machines on credit is almost impossible. At best he might take advantage of free school facilities to advance the position of his son. The almost inevitably developing estrangement between the two generations is, however, frequently the high price which parental pride has to pay. We may add that the tremendous social re-stratifications and upheavals of World War [I] . . . acted as a gigantic class-elevating machine. But the setting aside of the law of lifelong class membership seems to have more generally pushed upwards the lives of small merchants and peasants than of factory workers proper. . . .

It should be noted, however, that the lifetime nature of the industrial workers' status is mitigated at present by the hope of improvement of their situation by means of rising within the factory itself. This rise may carry them within the system of mechanized industry in terms of endurability and reward of their labor even further than it would be possible in a corresponding present-day handicraft, such as work in a smithy.

Another important contributing factor to the creation of class consciousness is the increasing difficulty which the individual worker experiences in acquiring a feeling for his profession (a difficulty brought about by the technologically conditioned division of labor). The moving from one place to another, combined with movement from one occupation to another, so frequent among present-day labor, prevents the growth of psychological identification on the part of the worker with his economic activity, his profession. Work stability is highest among male workers in their younger years, namely between the ages from 17 to 21, but lowest during the following years, 22 to 30. Above 40 both male and female workers once more achieve a high de-

<sup>8</sup> [*Social Peace*.]

gree of occupational stability. But the nature of many types of labor tends in the same direction. Sombart, with justification, inquires how the worker in a factory producing insect powder or corn plasters or sulphuric acid can gain an inner relationship to his occupation. The bleakness and wretchedness characteristic of the majority of his labor functions are incapable of inculcating in the modern industrial worker an *esprit de corps*, a guild spirit, such as the artisans possessed. The effect of this is that his emotional needs are transferred from the unloved or indifferent occupation which has become nothing more than a means toward earning a living, to the wider sphere of his social life, to his class. Class consciousness becomes the ideal expression of the feeling of belonging, though not to a profession, yet to a branch of industry. The more severely industrialism damages and disturbs the workers' inner life the more important class consciousness becomes to them as an anchor of safety, as an ideal which particularly the most valuable elements among them embrace. Class consciousness is the refuge, once love for his work has disappeared, which meets the worker's need for love and pride; love to his class comrades, pride towards the class strangers.

In this sense socialism is nothing else than the enlargement or rather continuation and realization of the human right theory. This theory (1789) states that every human being possesses from birth the inalienable right to equal position in society. While the theory contained the right to property, it was formulated without reference to advancement in the economic sphere of life. Thus its effect was at first political. It resulted in the political and juridical equalization of all before the law, a change which found its most forceful military expression in the slogan that every soldier carried the marshal's baton in his knapsack. Indeed, all civil posts and honors were theoretically, and in individual cases also practically, made available even to the poorest man from the people. Social stratification according to estate was destroyed by equality before the law (freedom of marriage, trade, and movement, availability of offices, declaration of human rights). The community of interests of modern classes became free and mobile, a fact that convinced the French democrats of the first half of the 19th century that classes had ceased to exist after the French Revolution. . . . Very soon it became clear, however, that the removal of all legal barriers which had impeded the rise of the proletarians was incapable of doing away with the presence of the initial economic stratification based on property. Even after the abolition of barriers between bourgeoisie and feudal aristocracy, high and low, enfranchised and disenfranchised persons, the difference between exploiters and exploited, loafers and workers, rich and poor, remained. Human rights

suffered shipwreck, even in their political form, on the rock of economic inequality between the classes. The hungry worker was not in a position to make free decisions when selling his labor power. The right to the development of his gifts or the possibility of such a development proved to him just as worthless as, let us say, to the incurably sick person the right to recovery. Human rights are not what one *may* do but what one *can* do.

The difference in the points from which men start the race of life sets barriers to the equality of rights. The wellborn have an innate advantage over the lowly. It will only rarely be possible to make up for the advantage. Thus economics inhibits the process of natural selection in the Darwinian sense as the selection of the fittest in the struggle of life. It is due to the difference in starting points that the stupid, ungifted rich man may succeed with the help of good advice in improving his social position in life while the gifted poor man is not always able to bring about an important change in his. Based on this realization, an equalizing socio-political demand was raised at a very early date, gaining a particularly strong hold among militant labor since the efforts of Saint-Simon's follower, Bazard: the demand for the abolition of inheritance. In the International Workingmen's Association, Michael Bakunin paid special attention to it.

#### *IV. Growth of Class Ethics*

##### INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The laborer is that proletarian who possesses the most highly developed feeling for human dignity and considers it below his dignity to beg, steal, or sell himself. Dignity is the mother of class consciousness; the class struggle presupposes "status consciousness." Gradually appeals to charity, understanding, the ultimate community of all interests cease; appeals which still dominated so profoundly the working class literature of the '48 period.

##### CLASS AND NATION

Mankind seen as a whole does not form a uniform mass but can be divided into groups which possess the most diverse characteristics. The main lines which cut across mankind, dividing it into definite parts, may be traced according to two criteria. The first bases itself on the unit of living together, national feeling, race, language, the state, or in whatever other individual form the concept of "Volk" may be expressed. Humanity is here divided into some kind of nationally separate groups, such as Germans, Frenchmen, Italians, Russian, Englishmen. The lines of division are vertical: groups



therefore lie alongside each other. According to the second, however, scientific analysis is instituted from other viewpoints, and bases research on a unit of different type. This unit is the social one. All of mankind, or at least the totality of European and American mankind, is divided along social categories, classes, occupational groups, income groups, etc. The lines of division running through the entity are horizontal. Groups lie on top of each other, are horizontally stratified. It is almost unnecessary to point out that the former type of division corresponds to the nationalist, the latter to the socialist philosophy of life. Groups analyzed on the basis of the first method include individuals of the most diverse economic and educational classes; those for which the second method is used, include individuals of the most diverse languages, districts, races, and citizens of the most diverse states and worlds. No nationalist must overlook the economical and occupational stratification of the group "nation," nor must any socialist disregard the ethnic and linguistic mixture within the group "class." The fact that humanity as a whole is simultaneously divided by vertical and horizontal lines of differentiation is quite clear to both. The basic difference between the two viewpoints lies in the higher or lower rank which they assign to them. For the one, the concept of nation ranks in a superior position, that of class in an inferior one; for the others the concept of class is the primary, the concept of nation the secondary one. To put it differently: one believes that community of language and race, the close living together, the common fate of nations represent an ethnically and historically determining link compared to which all differences of status and style of life are bound to remain in the background. The other holds that equality of class position and way of life, identity of wealth and comfort on one hand, or of misery and aspiration on the other, and, finally, the identity of opposition, have created among the classes such a high degree of international solidarity that contrasts of a purely external kind, such as language and citizenship, are bound to be displaced by them. In both instances the term "are bound to" is used to convey what has been found to be the case as well as what ought to be. It is therefore to be taken as a scientific statement of fact as well as an ethical demand. To put it differently once more: both viewpoints base themselves on the same perceptions. It is only the allocation of stresses which differs.

Homogeneity of individual fortunes is by its very nature potentially without limit. It ignores the presence of states and may exceed in intensity the homogeneity created by linguistic, cultural, or national ties. That is why this homogeneity has led to international class formations. Christian Garve al-

ready remarked in 1786 that differences between peoples were smaller than the differences between the estates within the same people. A greater distance separated a German peasant from a German aristocrat, psychologically as well as economically, than separated a German peasant from a Polish peasant. Several observers picked up these thoughts once more half a century later with great force. Hardly another word of de Tocqueville has been proved truer than his statement that class differences within the same society were at times deeper than differences between nations. Each nation, in fact, was composed of two "nations" differing greatly from each other with regard to physical, psychological, and even ethnographic considerations. To this thesis corresponded also the social novel by Benjamin Disraeli (later Lord Beaconsfield) which carried the significant title: *Sybil, or the Two Nations* (1845). Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels then asked the "proletarians of all countries" in the *Communist Manifesto* (1847) to unite, as they had "nothing to lose" except their chains. The doctrine that the horizontal divisions among nations into social classes possessed greater dynamic power than the vertical division of mankind into nations represented, by implication, the theoretical foundation for the organization of the International Workingmen's Association.

#### SOLIDARITY

Out of the proletarian socialist philosophy grew, spontaneously and apodictically, the demand for class solidarity as an ethical postulate. The commandment was formulated like this: the individual has the duty to subordinate himself to the whole; the single worker thus has the duty to subordinate himself to the concept of the working class or, at least, to that part of the working class employed in his factory, or rather its concretely measurable representation: the majority. Adherence to this duty is especially sacred in times of struggle, when a strike for improved wages is to be initiated or, after its completion, return to work is indicated. The most despicable type of worker, according to the ethical norms of social movements, is the strikebreaker who stabs his comrades in the back by remaining at work or prematurely going back to work, thus lessening their chance for victory. He is simply a scoundrel. No term is too low for him. . . .

The strikebreaker falls subject to defamation, thus social boycott. Defeated, he must put up with all sorts of tricks which are played on him, must formally apologize, or run through the city streets with a placard denoting his crimes. For him there are no excuses, no mitigating circumstances, even if he himself acted from the noblest personal motives (love for his children,

loyalty to his employer); nor if he belongs to a more poorly rewarded stratum to whom the wage level seems sufficient where it appears intolerable to his striking fellow workers. For frequently strikers and strikebreakers belong to two different social strata which are fighting a "class struggle" with each other. In countries of more advanced working class organization, such as Germany and England, they can sometimes be aptly differentiated by the terms organized and unorganized workers.

The military duty of the individual born into the working class is thus not merely fixed in an ethical code, but is also of a coercive nature analogous to the military duty to which the state subjects every citizen whether born within or without its frontiers. Punishment of the deserter is desired and takes the form, if necessary, of depriving him of life or property. The history of workers' movements is, in fact, everywhere characterized by the attempts, continued till the present day, on the part of those on strike, to use force against those who are willing to work, if peaceful persuasion by the workers manning the picket lines proves ineffective. In times of general strike and highest excitement the ethical demand for class solidarity of all class comrades, to be backed, if necessary, by force, has even been extended to the women who gain their livelihood by the sale of their bodies. During general strikes in Italian cities it has frequently occurred that excited masses of the population have marched in front of the *bordellos* and closed them, or at least posted guards before them. The reason given was that during the acute phase of the proletarian struggle for liberation it was the duty of the female proletarian sexually exploited by the bourgeoisie, namely the prostitute, to take a holiday; that, just as the male proletarians were intent on harming the ruling classes in their economic needs, the female proletarian should contribute her part in order to disturb the ruling class in the satisfaction of its sexual needs. As male workers crossed their arms, so the prostitutes should cross their legs. The basis of this demand is not merely the humane feeling of regard and pity for the girls, but also an instinct of class unity developed to its last logical consequence (even though the assumption that the customers of the prostitutes were exclusively recruited from the ranks of the bourgeoisie is not in accord with the facts).

For the maintenance of class discipline organized labor even uses tactics which do not shrink from utilizing employers who are or have been rendered willing to cooperate. Frequently special paragraphs of contracts or other industrial peace pacts, often after the ending of strikes, are used to force the employers to employ in their enterprises only union-organized workers

and respectively to dismiss unorganized workers now employed. This is the method of the closed shop. The procedure, however, is not always directed at the achievement of solidarity through the creation of a unified, organized mass without regard to the person. In America the solidarity of white proletarians frequently halts before the color line. Black and yellow workers are frequently excluded from work by the organized white workers even when they ask for nothing better than to be permitted to join the organization, and thereby specifically recognize the duty to solidarity.

Socialism in Italy has at times achieved the highest degree of human solidarity. The events which accompany strikes there are expressive testimony of this. It was quite usual, when a strike started in one town, to remove first of all the children of the striking workers and distribute them among the working class families of the neighboring towns for free bed and board. It is true that this method did not lack an economic motive: there were some hundred or thousand fewer hungry mouths to feed. In other words: the chance for victory of the strikers increases. Yet the factor of class ethics weighs more heavily in this procedure: the warm feeling of solidarity, and the pity, touching in its humane expressions, for the innocent victims of the great modern struggles between warring interests. A frequent point in the programs of Italian political or industrial workers' organizations is the demand for a moral way of life. People about whose way of life there is some suspicion are refused acceptance. The demand for a Socialist's personal integrity has become the norm. Feeling of solidarity is here based on two factors: morality and class. Class solidarity resting on an ethical base sometimes reaches a pitch of intensity which reminds us of the days and psychology of early Christianity.

A Mantuan union of women landworkers stipulated in its program in 1902 as the main weapons in their struggle the duties of power of persuasion, comradeship, kindness, and love of neighbor. It obligated its members in case of spreading unemployment to take turns at handing over jobs to those comrades who had become unemployed. The members also were pledged to support their pregnant comrades not only through help from the union treasury but also through personal gifts. They were admonished to be good wives and mothers; to flee vice, though "love" was permitted to them. Furthermore they were duty bound not only to abstain from thefts in the fields themselves but also to prevent others from thieving wherever possible. The socialist sketches and novel fragments of the poet Edmondo de Amicis do not only represent the tenor of this program in their spirit. Their characters



are also highly moral beings, and are not the fictional creatures of a poet's imagination but rather represent accurately the prevailing mood of the Italian proletarian mass movement between, say, 1893 and 1900.

In the field of the wage struggle the ethical form of class solidarity finds its most profound expression in the so-called sympathy strike. In it a locally or occupationally separate group of workers, at peace with their employers, voluntarily and sacrificially enter a strike in favor of another, distant (or, if local, then occupationally separate) striking group of workers whose prospects of victory may be in danger. The impelling motive is fraternity, class-determined love of one's neighbor. The immediate cause of the sympathy strike is the truly mass psychological eruption of excitement, sudden spread of the atmosphere of battle, "contagion." The latter is particularly true of the locally limited battle centers. Usually, admittedly, the sympathy strike is only a conscious tactic for the achievement of economic security by pressuring intimidated public opinion and orienting it towards the aims of the strike leaders; thus an attempt to increase the strike's chances of victory through its spread to unconcerned groups of workers who, due to their lack of personal contact, would from the viewpoint of mass psychology be otherwise hard to reach. Under this last category fall primarily sympathy strikes extending across national borders (dock workers, miners, etc.) in which, without doubt, local linguistic and national differences exclude the dominance of purely emotional motives among the workers.

#### POLITICAL HATRED AS A CONCOMITANT OF GROUP SOLIDARITY

The very intensity of feeling and firmness of institutions creating solidarity within the anticapitalist mass movement naturally tended to loosen its connection to human groups standing outside the particular association. If what Nietzsche says is true, that every ideal presupposes both love and hatred, admiration and contempt, but that in all these ideals the negative elements are to be considered the primary motivations, then it is clear that the workers' movement, born in opposition to the possessing classes, has expended its entire reservoir of love on itself. Only social democratic cant, based on fear of the propagandistic disadvantages of such a confession, and contemptible consideration for moralistic fellow travelers and nonpartisans, will deny the statement made by the Dutch Marxist Herman Gortner: the stronger the love to one's own class, the weaker the sympathy for the enemies of that class. The one excludes the other. The urge for sympathy is exhausted within one's own ranks. Thus the frequent note of hatred in the newspapers of the anticapitalist mass movement. However, other factors

as well are responsible for this rudeness which has also been called "improper tone." Only those not acquainted with the laws of mass psychology will be surprised by it in view of the youthful nature of the movement, the educational level of the workers, and the need of the intellectuals attached to the movement to assert their leadership role and to prove the genuineness of their convictions before the followers through their supercilious behavior and coarseness of language vis-à-vis those of their colleagues who remained with the bourgeois parties. Furthermore, the contrast between labor's Cinderella-like position in the economic and political sphere and the tremendous role which it has chosen for itself frequently tends to stimulate the feeling of bitterness and the violence of accent which accompany the spirit of battle. It is true, as Socialists always have claimed energetically, that theoretically hatred has nothing to do with the class struggle and that generally it is not being "preached." No unbiased person will, however, be able to deny that it usually accompanies the struggle. That this also projects hatred into the future must be clear as well. Hatred is a good means for the conquest of power, but serves as a poor basis for the treatment of men and things by those who have acquired power.

## JOHN DOLLARD

IN THE human sciences, deviations are as important as types; intensive case studies of particular communities are required if general principles are to achieve concrete applications and if actual social groups are to be understood and explained. "Southerntown," the subject of the following discussion by John Dollard, American sociologist and social psychologist, is not an imaginary community nor a composite picture of a number of communities, but is an actual semiurban center in the "Deep South" which, for obvious reasons, must be anonymous. In it one may discern the caste tensions typical of the South, but reflected idiosyncratically by a town with a character of its own. Yet, as a Southern town, it is especially accessible to the study of social stratification, for caste lines there are precise functions of the skin-pigmentation of its citizens. Negroes live on one side of a geographical line formed by a railroad track which bisects the city, whites live on a slight rise of land on the other side; and the lines of caste deference run in one social and geographical direction: Negroes defer to whites. Status thus recognized throughout the community brings with it certain economic and sexual advantages, together with an automatic self-esteem. This does not, however, prevent a degree of social ascent on the part of enterprising Negroes who entertain the ideals of the "middle class;" but even economic ascent does not entitle Negroes either to expect or demand deferential treatment from white members of lower classes nor equal treatment from white class-peers, so that caste rigidity remains unimpaired. Population-wise, membership in the two castes is roughly equal, but practically all whites are middle class while eight out of ten Negroes are lower class. Southerntown is a depot for goods and services for a surrounding agricultural area whose economic existence is bound up with a single staple crop (cotton). Of the area as a whole, it is "Democratic, dry, Protestant, agrarian," with ninety-eight percent of the population American born.

The study itself is based upon personal interviews together with the writer's own impressions, observations, and inferences. There is a natural wariness on the part of Southerntowners and a basic mistrust of one who is at once a stranger, a "Yankee," and interested in the life histories and characteristic attitudes of a socially disfavored group. On the other hand, as Dollard makes explicit, he was not free from the biases of one who was a Northerner, a "socially mobile person," a "member of a middle-class university group," and these, together with his general acceptance of psycho-analytic concepts and techniques, must influence the manner in which he interpreted his data. The reader may judge how far, or in what way, this is true; and may also judge whether the conceptual scheme employed is adequate to the task of describing and explaining the divisive and unifying forces clearly and accurately. Published in 1937, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*, from which the following selection has been taken, is widely recognized as an important contribution to the study of the Negro in America.

*CASTE AND CLASS IN A SOUTHERN TOWN*[*Caste*]

. . . Description of social life in Southerntown inevitably involves a discussion of the nature of caste and class. Caste and class distinctions are ways of dividing people according to the behavior expected of them in the society. Caste and class show the relations in which people stand to one another in Southerntown; they organize local life securely and make social coöperation possible. They deserve a detailed discussion in order that the emotional patterns appropriate to them may come into clear outline. We do not have here any racial soul or genius defending its heritage, as is often alleged; what we see is a moral and status order in operation, whose operators safeguard and perpetuate their positions in it.

Caste has replaced slavery as a means of maintaining the essence of the old status order in the south. By means of it racial animosity is held at a minimum. Caste is often seen as a barrier to social contact or, at least, to some forms of social contact. It defines a superior and inferior group and regulates the behavior of the members of each group. In essence the caste idea seems to be a barrier to legitimate descent. A union of members of the two castes may not have a legitimate child. All such children are members of the lower caste and cannot be legitimated into the upper caste by the fact that they have an upper-caste father or mother. Caste in Southerntown is also a categorical barrier to sexual congress between upper-caste women and lower-caste men, within or without the married state. It does not result in such a barrier between upper-caste men and lower-caste women. In this it seems to be modeled on the patriarchal family with its possessive prerogatives of the male; it has a double standard of the same type. Nothing else seems absolute about the caste barrier. It does not totally exclude social contact and seems to have no other mark so distinctive as the marriage and sexual prohibition.

It is necessary to remind ourselves that American democratic mores are set in quite another current. They do not recognize barriers to legitimate descent or preferential rights to sex relationships. Democratic society guarantees equal opportunity to enjoy whatever goods and services society has

---

This selection has been reprinted from John Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*, by permission of Harper and Bros., N.Y., publishers, Copyright, 1937, 1949, by John Dollard, pp. 62-68, 70, 72-73, 75-80, 82-91, 93-94, 95-96, 433-434, 436-444. The second, 1949 edition has been used.



to offer; there are no arbitrary limitations based on race or color. This is the sense in which northerners seem theoretical to southerners when the Negro is discussed. Northerners look at the Negro through the constitutional window; southerners look at him through the caste window. In the train of the barriers to legitimate descent and sexual contact come other limitations. The caste line works out also as an automatic block to social advancement for the Negro and this means that the highest prestige prizes are not accessible to him. For example, we bring millions of boys into the world who are in training as future presidents of the United States; no one expects, however, that Negro boys are really included. Their caste membership silently excludes them from such high hopes.

American caste is pinned not to cultural but to biological features—to color, features, hair form, and the like. This badge is categorical regardless of the social value of the individual. It is in this sense that caste is “undemocratic” since it accepts an arbitrary token as a means of barring Negroes from equal opportunity and equal recognition of social merit. Negroid body form was at one time a mark of a Negro culture and is still to some degree a mark of an inferior assimilation of white culture; but both of these differentiating marks of Negroes are rapidly diminishing and in the course of time the physical stigmata may be left isolated as the only warrant of caste difference. The cultural stigmata of the past seem likely to disappear altogether.

Inferior caste results in a degree of social isolation for the individuals concerned. It tends to limit the personal development of members so that it is more difficult for them to compete for the highest social rewards and position. American policy is somewhat contradictory on this score, since we really do not keep the caste barrier fixed by the most effective methods. Slavery in this sense is much superior as a method of holding a population as a subject group. The upper caste would be more secure if the inferior caste were to have a separate language, or at least if its acquisition of our speech were limited. It would be safer also if lower-caste members were not able to read, if there were no social or religious sharing, and if the group were geographically immobile and extremely limited in social participation. The leaven of our dominant democratic mores has, however, made such a firm adjustment impossible; war broke up the southern approximation of it and we have a system of subjugation which is, for all its seeming firmness, shaky and contradictory.

Caste members tend to develop a distinctive psychology. This is no less true of the white caste than of the Negro, and we must never forget that we

have two castes in the South and not just one. Southern white solidarity is caste solidarity. Nor should we overlook the fact that most of us, in the North as well as South, are members of the white caste, that we do, in practice, define the Negro as something categorically inferior and demand special privileges for ourselves and fellow whites. Our sympathy also tends to run along caste lines, even if it is not so acute in the North by virtue of the absence of the problem in a crucial form. . . .

The solidarity of the white caste on sexual and social issues has been widely noticed. When southern white people tell a northerner that after a few years in the South he will feel about Negroes just as southerners do, they are making the point that he joins the white caste. The solicitation is extremely active, though informal, and one must stand by one's caste to survive. Negroes, of course, know the power of white solidarity better than any one else. A Negro put it this way: Although white men often appear to be good friends to Negroes, if a Negro commits a crime against a white man, the white friend will invariably turn against him; whereas if a white man has any little trouble, all his white friends flock to him and defend him. He says it is different with Negro friends: they stick by you better. . . .

To the Negro, of course, the caste barrier is an ever-present solid fact. His education is incomplete until he has learned to make some adjustment to it, usually the one preferred by the white caste. Since our democratic society is built on equal opportunity to achieve the highest social distinction, highest class position, and highest financial rewards, the caste barrier is obviously in contradiction with it. The Negro must haul down his social expectations and resign himself to a relative immobility in contrast to the dominant spirit of our society. This dominant spirit is well expressed by the notion of "beginning at the bottom and working to the top." Morton has pointed out that the Negro may begin at the bottom but, on the average, he may expect to stay there, or pretty close to it.

There was no lack of appreciation of this fact among my informants. A Negro plantation manager, a very rare specimen, said that the Negroes on his plantation tend to improve faster under a Negro manager. They say to themselves that what he can do, they can do; whereas with a white boss they feel that the gulf is too great and make no effort to improve. My informant believed that white men cultivate this sense of intrinsic superiority of the whites and use it to keep the Negroes in their places, as the whites see them. . . . The informant . . . thought the white people in America have their minds pretty well made up about the Negro; they are determined not to let him get anywhere. By "getting anywhere" he meant they will not let

the Negro have full opportunity for social advancement and do not expect of him the efforts appropriate to it.

On the other hand, Negroes, like other Americans, pursue the goals and ideals which are characteristic of America and cannot in these days ignorantly accept their "place" as once they could. The Negro shares inevitably the values of the dominant group and aspires to full participation in it. . . .

Since our social values are best represented by white persons, the Negro aspires also to whiteness. . . . It is not believed that Negroes want to be "white" in any abstract sense; what they want is to be indistinguishably full participants in American society. For the present, to be white seems to be the best guarantee of this complete human status. . . .

The principle . . . seems very simple. Whiteness represents full personal dignity and full participation in American society. Blackness or darkness represents limitation and inferiority; and sometimes even animal character is imputed to it. The Negroes share sufficiently in American society to want to be fully human in the American sense and to this end they prefer to be as light as possible, since the white caste seems to grant some recognition, informally of course, to the lighter colors. Consciousness of color and accurate discrimination between shades is a well-developed Negro caste mark in Southerntown; whites, of course, are not nearly so skilful in distinguishing and naming various shades. . . .

As a result of caste pressure, there is a sort of passive solidarity within the Negro caste. This is illustrated by a complaint often made by the police in Southerntown. They say that Negroes will not testify against other Negroes; that often, for example, those who have been right at the scene of a murder will not talk and will pretend to know nothing about it. Then the police have to use third-degree methods to get the truth out of them. The Negroes have a reputation with whites of shielding, hiding, and aiding criminal members of their race. The degree of solidarity is disappointingly small, though, from the standpoint of middle-class Negroes. One of my informants stated that a certain prominent Negro scholar was a talented man, but that many Negroes were disappointed in him because he did not take a stronger attitude of leadership for the "group." She said that one of the constant disappointments with Negro leaders is that they work for their own selfish interests and forget the group which they represent.

Another Southerntown Negro showed how membership in the Negro caste is forced on the Negro, not chosen by him. He illustrated this statement by referring to the contrary behavior of the Negroes in the North. On one occasion in Ohio he was riding on a bus in which were two white

people and a Negro girl. The white people sat up in front, as did the informant, but the girl went to the back of the bus. He felt this was somewhat characteristic of northern Negroes; they do not want to cluster with other Negroes. He later found out that she came from an Ohio town where there were only eight or nine Negro families. These families all go to different churches and live in different parts of the town; they do not want to be grouped together by the whites. The dispersion is explained by the fact that, if they cluster by their own wish, then the whites will make them cluster legally. They had best stay apart and view themselves as individuals and not as members of a group. In the South, on the contrary, Negroes have no choice; an appearance of solidarity is forced on them by segregation but it does not result in sentiments of being bound together.

It is frequently alleged, and with truth, that the social arrangement of having two castes in the South is a means of limiting conflict between the races, a conflict which is always potential whenever the races use the same schools, trains, amusement facilities, etc. There is another and less desirable feature of the caste arrangement: It limits the possibility of sympathetic contact. Middle-class Negroes are especially sensitive to their isolation and feel the lack of a forum in Southerntown where problems of the two races could be discussed. It is often something of a discovery when white people learn that there are Negro people of refined feeling and noteworthy talent, because they stand in such sharp contrast to the white-caste stereotype of the Negro. . . .

### [*Class*]

The existence of social classes in the South has been noted by many observers despite the convention that social class is not a feature of our American democratic society. We are not accustomed to think in these terms and, to be sure, the class hierarchy is not so clearly marked in the northern states. At least three classes may be noticed which we designate briefly as lower, middle, and upper. The existence of these classes was quite clear in the South even before the War. It may be that this picture is clearer to Negroes than to others; at least, an astute Negro writer has commented on the class problem and asserted that Negroes have characteristic attitudes toward each one of the classes in the white group.

The existence of the lower-class whites or poor white group has been one of the continuous features of southern social organization. One might say of them that they have neither capital, talent, nor ancestry to give them prefer-



ential claims on income or prestige. From the standpoint of social usefulness, they have arms and legs and minimum skills, usually of the agricultural type. Biologically they are old Americans. In the area surrounding Southerntown they seem to have a certain amount of diffuse resentment against upper-class white people and some resentment against Negroes, especially the middle-class Negroes. They seem to face the greatest difficulties in gaining status because they do not have the capital to begin making any kind of advance, nor do they have the resolute and tormented determination of some of the immigrant groups. Since their chances of social advancement are relatively low, they have little to lose in status or economic reward by lax behavior and in general they do not maintain the personal standards of the middle-class whites. . . . If it is said that the Negroes do not have social equality in the South, it is equally true that this class of white people does not have it either. . . . In an economic sense their competitors are the lower-class Negroes and, since the whites have the political instrument to work with, they are enabled to gain some advantages over their rivals; on the other hand they face economic disadvantages in the form of the alliance between the field Negroes and white owners which tends to exclude them from plantation work. . . .

In contrast to the lower-class white people, and distinct from them, is the middle-class group. In general, middle-class members have risen from the lower class rather than fallen from the upper. Their class membership is based on small capital holdings, or on the possession of social skill, managerial or professional, which enables them to make a claim on a larger income and gives them a higher position in the eyes of others. One feels their spirit to be energetic and acquisitive. In the main they intend to make their way by their exertions and personal contributions to the welfare of the community. Their personal standards of behavior, on questions of drinking, divorce, and profanity, seem to be more rigorous than those of the classes above or below them. They seem to be religious and are in fact faithful churchgoers. These people are the best demonstrations of the "equal chances" offered by American society. Their class position itself is a way station to still higher prestige levels. Usually some degree of education is combined with capital when the latter is present; if not, the capital may be invested in the education of the children and thus win for the family line a secure middle-class position. It should be noted that there is a limit to our democratic possibility of social advancement for any and every individual; this limit is reached when previous acquisition and use of capital by others constitute a barrier to the advancement of new group members.

Middle-class white people in Southerntown seem to have a great deal of contempt for the lower-class whites, and this contempt often flares into open animosity. They also have vigorous hostile attitudes toward the Negroes and are seldom found in the ranks of those who take the friendly attitude toward the Negro evinced by the white aristocracy. They hold that the main tormenters of the Negro are the lower-class whites, a statement which the Negroes tend to confute. Negroes, especially the most vocal of the middle-class Negroes, say that their real antagonists are not the whites of the highest or the lowest status; the former have too much to be jealous and the latter get from the upper-class whites the same treatment as the Negroes. . . . The Negroes have a name for the middle-class white group which corresponds remarkably well with their position in the eyes of the sociological analyst; they call them "strainers," those who are pressing forward and straining to get on in the world. Middle-class people must stress sharply the differences between themselves and the lower-class whites and Negroes because they are none too sure that the differences are very important or permanent.

Often in the face of economic reverses middle-class families will cling bitterly to their class standards, one of which is education for their children. They will endure great hardships and humiliation to make this education possible rather than risk demoting the family line to a lower-class position. They will struggle to maintain their children in the same class, to see that they marry appropriate persons, that the daughter has the right kind of a wedding, and so on.

Most of the businessmen in Southerntown fall in the group of middle-class people. The following note on a Rotary Club meeting will give an idea of what they hear on such an occasion:

Attended Rotary Club luncheon today; the speaker talked about how much bigger profits one can make if one takes a human attitude toward one's employees, considers them not as automatons but as persons. We should have work for our hands to do, clean thoughts for our minds, love in our hearts, etc. Much emotion on part of speaker, fluent speech full of clichés and quotations from inspirational sources. The chairman said in his speech of thanks, and in justification of Rotary, that it was only in a Rotary Club that one could hear such a speech.

There seems to be, on the whole, a much better disciplining of members within the middle-class group than is the case with the other two classes. As "strainers" they are on the march to higher status position and, like an army on the march, they are provident, industrious, vigilant, and determined. . . .

This is not to say that all middle-class members do or are able to conform to the strictest standards. The picture presented here is the one which middle-class individuals strive toward and which most of them manage to approximate. Disordered personalities exist in this class, secret drinkers will be found, sex delinquencies are not unknown, although there is usually the attempt to keep them secret. In considering the "strains" of modern life in reference to nervous and mental disorder, one might well note those imposed on individuals in this class where the pressure toward individual achievement and advancement, which require exceptional impulse renunciation, is so great.

So powerful is the strain toward a democratic uniformity in our society that the emerging lower and middle classes have tended to replace the old aristocratic upper class in social significance; but it will still be worth while to identify this class group. It is the remains of the ruling group against which the Civil War was fought, a group whose claims to precedence were heavily discredited by defeat in the War. Since it is but little represented in Southerntown, we will try to characterize it for the culture area of the South as a whole. Although it has lost its actual grip on the social machine to a very great extent, it has maintained the momentum of its social prestige and assimilation into it is still a great value in the South.

To be an upper-class person is to have a certain kind of memory of the past and to hold a certain rôle in the eyes of others with similar memories. If, on meeting a southern person, the stranger could by chance open a history book and ask him to thumb through it, and if the southerner stopped now and then to say, "Oh, yes, that is Governor So-and-so; he was my grandmother's brother," or "General Blank married a second cousin of my mother, she was of the South Carolina Blanks, you know," he would be dealing with an upper-class person. Originally, no doubt, membership in this class was based on a strong position in the economic system and entry to it was often secured by possession of special social skills and money. Like all aristocratic traits, however, class membership tends to be socially inherited and does not continually need the underpinning of actual economic pre-eminence. In its day this was a functioning class leading in statecraft and agriculture, and disciplining its individuals for leadership. Nowadays it seems to be based largely on memories of interrelationship with other leading families of the past, rather than on current achievement. It still differentiates sufficiently the behavior of those who are born into it so that it is a formative force in the culture. . . .

With this class, which is sure of itself socially, a freer measure of impulse

expression is possible than with the stressful middle-class group. There is a more tolerant attitude toward religion and drinking and a less intensive sense of scandal about personal delinquencies. . . .

. . . In all cases the upper-class attitudes toward Negroes seem mild and there is no sense of being challenged or threatened by them. An upper-class woman in Southerntown commented on the hostility of certain middle-class whites, whom she named, for the Negroes, and said that she came from the upper group who like Negroes. In actual life, she was known to be rather foolish and indulgent in her treatment of them, at least according to prevailing standards in Southerntown. This lenient attitude is undoubtedly an historical resultant in the upper class who have had long accommodative relations with Negroes as master to slave, have many personal memories of them, and have been freed from the competition which middle- and lower-class people have experienced. . . .

The lower- and middle-class whites are indeed in some ways not so near to upper-class white people as the Negroes, perhaps again for the reason that class antagonism separated the white groups in earlier days and some relics of it still exist despite present-day solidarity against the Negro caste. The mammy tradition is frequently thought of as a criterion of upper-class membership; it is a point which whites like to remember and Negroes like to forget. . . .

As already observed, we have a situation in Southerntown where there are not only castes, but classes within the two castes. It seems reasonable also to posit three classes within the Negro group, although only two of them will be discussed here. There was no chance for me to examine the criteria for the upper-class Negroes, although undoubtedly such a designation is worth making in view of what is known of Negroes in Philadelphia, Washington, Charleston, New Orleans, and other cities. Here we will discuss only the lower- and middle-class Negro groups as they are actually represented in Southerntown.

The Negro lower class is the same "arms and legs" group with the simplest of agricultural skills and personalities adapted to continue peaceably a subordinate rôle in the plantation economy. It is at the bottom of the economic and social system and forms a broad base on which society in this area rests, a fact by no means true for the whole South. Attention would be called to the class, in the first place, by the type of observation made by one of my Negro informants who was a teacher. This man told me that his disciplinary problems are much more severe with children who come from tenant homes; the children who come from Negro landowning families



submit more easily to school routine. . . . Presumably the landowning Negroes are in or on the edge of the middle class and have acquired the refinements of behavior and personal repressions characteristic of that class. It is this lower class whom southerners hold up to northerners as the reality of the problem with which the South has to deal in contrast with the northerners' idealized picture of the Negro. . . .<sup>1</sup> The behavior of middle-class Negroes is differentiated from that of the lower-class group; when a southerner says "Negro" he refers invariably to his stereotype of the lower-class Negro. It is this group which draws and seems to deserve the low opinion of the whites.

The class grouping, as we shall see, tends to be similar in the two castes, with the crucial exception that the hope of social advancement in the Negro middle class is emphatically limited by the caste barrier. Another differentiation is that social advancement in the Negro middle class seems more often due to developed talent or skill than to capital accumulation. Not infrequently, too, Negroes are aware of a family lineage and family tradition, although there is also a widespread consciousness of plantation cabin background. Frequently awareness of white blood and corresponding lightness of color play a rôle among the middle group of Negroes.

The impression one gets from Southerntown is that the Negro middle-class people are mostly teachers and ministers of the gospel, apparently a characteristic finding. There are two physicians, no lawyers, and a few businessmen including only two people who control a considerable acreage of land.

The attempt of the middle class to mark itself off from the pilloried lower-class Negroes seems constant. For example, the wife of a professional man said that she recently started her four-year-old son off to kindergarten in the Negro school. One day he came home from school and said, "Me wants something to eat." She told him that he had never learned that at home and he would not get it if he asked for it that way. She deplores the fact that she must send her son to school with children of illiterate families who get him into such ways of talking, but there is nothing else to do. She is a woman of college grade. It may be that historically the Negro mid-

<sup>1</sup> Very likely this ideal was achieved in the following way: the northerner identified himself with the Negro and assumed incorrectly that the lower-class Negro was like himself. Whenever he talked about the scandalous disadvantages suffered by the Negro he was thinking how he would feel in a similar situation and attributing his own indignation to the Negro. Possibly this was not altogether incorrect since humans tend to react similarly in the same situations. But it was probably a great exaggeration of the actual reaction of the Negro. The southerner, on the contrary, with the real lower-class Negro before him, reacted sharply against such an identification and stressed all possible points of difference to justify his superior caste position.

dle (and upper) classes are derived for the most part from the house servants and the free Negroes who formed one-ninth of the total Negro population in 1860. Undoubtedly, too, this class contains more mixed blood than the lower-class Negroes. . . . It is easy, in Southerntown at least, to observe the presence of persons of mixed blood in the middle class by talking to a group of county teachers or taking the frequently offered opportunity to "say a few words" at a rural Negro church. The teacher group is markedly more Caucasoid in its characteristics.

Middle-class Negroes follow, at least as an ideal, the highest standards of sexual morality. It is not certain that they measure up to them any better than do the whites, but it is certain that they appreciate them. One of my informants said, for example, that her stern conscience probably came from her mother and father; she mentioned her father in particular in this connection, saying that he had never done anything low or mean and never had any illegitimate children. He always took pride in the fact that, although the family had little in the way of possessions, they had integrity and were persons of high standards. . . .

Education is, of course, a passion with the middle-class Negroes, as has been frequently noted. The most extraordinary sacrifices may be made by parents to give their children opportunities for status advancement through education.

There is a good deal of shame among middle-class Negroes over the caste marks which whites take to be typical of all Negroes. Resentment of the mammy tradition has already been indicated. One of my woman informants told me of a Negro woman who made candy in a southern town and who put a dummy of herself outside her store as an advertisement. The dummy showed a very dark woman with a bandana around her head. The Negroes resented this fiercely and my informant thought the reason was that it reminded them of the mammy stereotype of the whites which they so much resent. For herself, she did not see why the resentment was so great, because she thought if the woman could make candy better than anyone else, it was all to the credit of the race. Again, there seems to be antagonism to spirituals since they are reminders of the slave situation. The same informant said that she thought it was foolish for her group to be ashamed of the spirituals; they ought to be proud of anything they could do better than anyone else. Middle-class Negro churches tend to be more sedate than the lower-class churches. The reason probably is that the emotionalism of the lower-class churches has become associated in white minds with primitive and animal behavior, and the middle-class Negroes wish to deny such a trait in them-

selves. It is often irritating to the spiritual-loving northerner to go to a concert in Southerntown. He wants spirituals and still more of them. All he will get will be a small group, usually beautifully sung. And he has to bear with a soprano soloist who sings "Trees" in a sentimental manner, various other vocal solos of indifferent quality, and a lot of piano playing, some good and some bad. This is probably what he might find in any small town; but after all, most small towns do not have and cannot sing spirituals. The fact seems to be that the classical part of the entertainment is stressed to show what the group can do and that it is not deficient in appreciation of "the best" in music. . . .

It is the Negro middle class which feels most bitterly the pressure of the caste barrier with its damaging effect on individual self-esteem; this barrier sets the Negro outside the possibility of achieving personal dignity in the fullest American sense. It seems likely that this fact, rather than a desire to be white in any physical sense, is at the bottom of the distress of so many people with mixed blood. Their sense of injustice is all the more keen since the personal achievement characteristic of middle-class Negro people is categorically superior to the large lower-class white group and to some of the middle-class whites. . . .

The advantage of outlining clearly a scheme of caste and class distinctions is that it enables one to place people and to have some systematic expectations of them. Let us practice a little by reminding ourselves that the "poor whites" are upper caste, but lower class, that the researcher is upper caste but middle class, that my best Negro informant was middle class but lower caste, and so on. It is within such a frame of reference that personality differences achieve their right perspective. Comparisons of psychological facts are only truly effective when the subjects are similar as to caste and class. A murder done by a lower-class Negro is a different kind of fact from a similar act by the president of the Rotary Club, who is, of course, upper caste and middle class; and in real life the two acts are treated differently by the group itself. Strain on the individual personality undoubtedly differs as between the castes and classes. An hypothesis, which needs to be tested, is that it is greatest in the middle-class Negro group for the reason that severe impulse restriction is enjoined without appropriate compensation from the status side. The more clearly the necessity of making out the systematic form of the social life comes home, the more one sees how qualified must be any social psychology which is developed by members of a single class.

One useful result of clarifying the class and caste picture is to learn that

white middle-class people show some loyalty for their Negro classmates across the caste line. Observations to this effect come from both white and Negro sides. This loyalty really should be described as an ambivalent relationship: hostility along caste lines, loyalty along class lines. A Negro informant says that educated colored people get much better treatment than uneducated ones. White people tend to be more respectful and friendly. This is the positive side of class loyalty. Still and all, she says, they seem to resent seeing a colored person dressed up and looking nice. She often feels criticized by white eyes when she goes out in a tastefully designed dress. This is the negative side of caste hostility.

A grandson of a Negro, highly placed in an economic sense, reported the civilities that his grandfather had received in contrast to other Negroes. He was said to have had good white friends in Southerntown. Three or four of these friends had his picture on their office walls and in their offices they somewhat relaxed the severity of caste conventions in talking to him. The grandson thinks that white people in the town show him deference because of his family and economic background. On the other hand, the grandfather had still to submit to galling restrictions, was addressed by his first name, and could not share in civic enterprises on equal terms.

It has sometimes seemed, in explanation of this ambivalence, that the class conflict centers around economic position and advantage, whereas the caste conflict centers around social, and ultimately sexual, contact. The white man can have a certain loyalty to members of his class in the Negro group providing the barriers against more intimate contact are maintained. The argument against "marrying a nigger" would come up as quickly against a middle-class as against a lower-class Negro. . . .

Another question of interest that arises from this classification is the way in which lower-class white people in the North differ from lower-class Negroes in the South. Since I have not studied the class question in the North I can offer only a guess. In so far as the lower class in the North has been recruited steadily for a century from foreign immigrants, it differs greatly from Negroes for obvious reasons. Whereas the Negroes have little hope of highest status because of the caste barrier, the immigrants have every hope of it, have come here expressly to strive for personal advancement and constantly see members of their own groups winning recognition. This hope of advancement tends to middle-class-ify all of northern society. The immigrants, further, were not all in the same class position in their home lands. Undoubtedly many of them already had middle-class standards and left their home lands under middle-class pressures toward advancement. Once



in the northern status structure, they show the energy and drive characteristic of a mobile class. The immigrants are, in one manner of speaking, our "Negroes," but they are temporary Negroes.

A comparison of the lower-class whites in the South and the lower-class Negroes is also important. One can say that the whites are much like the Negroes in respect to economic position, but have superior social status. They are able to affect the operations of the state by their votes and get a kind of noisy, if ineffectual, political representation. They are not categorically debarred from rising in the white-status scale, as are the Negroes. It is an impression, which should be checked, that direct sexual and aggressive expression, though freer among lower-class whites than in the upper classes, is still less common than with the Negroes. . . .

The hostility between the middle-class and lower-class whites is striking around Southerntown. Informant after informant from the middle-class group came forward with derogatory opinions relating to the poorer whites. A landowner told how mean his white tenants are, how spiteful and gossipy they are toward one another, how they always complain and demand things of him. He is going to replace them next year with Negroes. Another said that the white tenants are mean and disagreeable and contrasted them unfavorably with the Negroes who "know their place." . . .

Something should be said in detail about class structure in Southerntown. The white population is composed largely of middle-class persons. The Negro population is divided between a great mass of lower-class Negroes and a film of middle-class people. There seem to be very few upper- or lower-class whites in Southerntown, although probably more of the latter than of the former. This was expressed by a white informant who claimed that the white people in this town are *nouveau riche* or climbers, and not the real old southern type. The Southerntown area has not been settled as long as older regions of the South and still has a trace of the frontier social structure. It has been so prosperous at various times within recent years that a man who could get hold of land, even rent it, could make himself more or less independent with a very few crops. The result has been the advancement to middle-class status of considerable numbers of people, formerly less secure. In this sense "white superiority" in Southerntown really turns out to be the superiority of the white middle class which is automatically protected against competition from the Negroes by the caste barrier. . . .

*Caste Symbolism: Race Prejudice*

. . . The idea of the paternal rôle of the king and noble class is familiar even in recent modern history, and it is equally striking how regularly terms drawn from family discourse appear in reference to wider social institutions; some such terms are the "Little Father" of all the Russians, "the family of nations," "the Holy Father," and the democratic notion of "brotherhood of man." It seems an inevitable assumption that such figures of speech are intended to evoke for the wider institutions the potent responses and attitudes which have existed toward family members in childhood. They are the simplest and most accessible of images and are intended to make the impersonal institutions seem familiar and eternal as the parents do to the child. Since the monogamous patriarchal family is the prime character-forming agent in our society, it is from this unit that symbolisms are derived rather than from the sib, clan, or other type of grouping.

These considerations cast a new light on the very common statement of southern white people that Negroes are "like children." . . . It is said that like children they are irresponsible, pleasure-loving, and easily distracted. . . . It is often said that like children Negroes do not own anything and do not have the surging acquisitiveness of middle-class adults. We may note also that they are expected to be obedient without question and to omit all defiant reactions; as in the case of children, their elders and betters know what is good for them. Negroes are called by their first names without respect to their wishes, as are children. They are patronized and much irrational behavior is tolerated from them . . . which would be vigorously suppressed in white adults. A childlike deference of the "Honor Thy Father and Thy Mother" type is required. Negroes, like children, are said to have no care for the future and, were the parental solicitude of adults withdrawn, they would be helpless. Children are looked upon as amoral and not fully responsive to adult moral standards; the same view is frequently taken of the Negro. . . .

It is, of course, characteristic of the parental status that the elders have prerogatives denied to the child, but that along with these prerogatives they have duties and responsibilities absent in child life. The middle-class white people recognize these responsibilities and describe them as "taking care of" their Negroes. From the lower-class Negro side the same relationship is seen as having a white patron. It is well known from the study of family relations that aggressive responses are suppressed within the family group

for the sake of unity and peace. We . . . [observe] a similar process at work between the castes, i.e., suppression of Negro hostility toward the white caste and the taking up of accommodation attitudes. Very likely we . . . [emphasize too little] the strength of such attitudes among lower-class Negroes. . . . The analogy between this and the actual child-parent relationship is obvious. This parent-child symbol between the castes is one of the strongest barriers which a real economic democracy in the South would have to face. Very probably the caste institution could only be broken up when "brother" identifications with other Negroes, and perhaps whites, were substituted for the passive idealization of the "father"-planter and boss. . . .

A speculation which might be of considerable interest is the nature of the taboo placed on sexual contact between Negro men and white women. Even the thought of such a relationship evokes so much horror in the white man that one suspects that it must be deeply supported emotionally in his own life history. It is the unutterable crime and is felt fully to justify even the unprintable mutilations occasionally wrought on its Negro perpetrator. The only serviceable analogy that comes to mind is that such a relationship is perceived as a violation of the incest taboo, that the white woman occupies toward the Negro the same utterly inaccessible rôle that the white mother does to her white son. As a result of the intimacy of family bindings the most bitter revengeful tendencies can be generated around the incestuous affections. Is it not likely that the antagonism of the white boy against his mother-profaning male parent is directed toward the Negro man who dares to approach a white woman? From this standpoint every sexual contact is a rape and every woman in need of defense from such contact. Certainly every effort is made to place the white woman before the Negro in the same "holy" light in which the mother appears to the son.<sup>2</sup> In venturing this explanation we must remember what a peculiar state of affairs is to be explained and how bizarre the white attitude toward the rape problem seems; and we grant that some potent, but not very obvious, explanation is required. The comparison with the incest taboo corresponds to the rest of the paternal-filial symbolism just described.

These considerations throw a new light on "whiteness." It becomes the

<sup>2</sup> "I answer that our freedom from this curse is merely incidental to the general relations obtaining between the races, and properly ascribable to the general station and character of the white population, to the persistence of the same relative status between the masses of the two races that existed when the one was master and the other slave. Then the Negro was bred to absolute obedience, made to respect the white race because it was white, taught that the person, even the name, of the humblest white woman was something not to be profaned by touch or word or thought." A. H. Stone, *Studies in the American Race Problem* (New York, 1908), pp. 94-95; quoted by permission of Doubleday, Doran & Co.

symbol of personal maturity and dignity. The white man is the one who has really grown up and is himself capable of taking the parental rôle. Aspects of the rôle of the grown-up person are prestige, privilege, and responsibility, as compared with the rôles of children. While the whites often say that the Negroes are like children, they do not say that they themselves are like parents, stern and loving parents who claim the prerogatives of that status. A caste system, as compared with a true democracy, is a categorical barrier to growing up; an equivalent statement from the sociological point of view is that a caste system is a categorical barrier to social mobility. There is one very important difference between the Negro and the child. The inferior status of the white child is temporary and the hope of personal maturity is present, sure and strong; with the Negro the status of the child is confirmed and chronic, and there is no hope of escaping it. One might say, good-naturedly, that, if the lower-class Negroes are "like children," the middle-class and mulatto Negroes are like adolescents, halfway to the adult status. Power, prestige, and mastery are the prime values of our society, and they are therefore automatically the goals of the completely mature person. Control of money is the conventional route to such status advancement.

Lower-class Negroes are not always so childlike, in fact, as their social rôle would make them out to be. A statement of his social rôle always indicates what is desired of the individual, but not always what is delivered by him. The deference, subservience, and dependence of the lower-class Negro are often a social mask which he wears because he must and which conceals a well-fibered character capable of assuming adult status, did the social organization permit. Some children are like that too, formed and hardened with a mature psychic structure, while to all intents and purposes they play the social rôles of children.

We turn now to the mysterious but much discussed theme of race prejudice. In describing caste distinctions we have already indicated the factual material related to prejudice against Negroes. The major consideration seems to be that it is a defensive attitude intended to preserve white prerogatives in the caste situation and aggressively to resist any pressure from the Negro side to change his inferior position. . . .

From the standpoint of personality study, race prejudice seems to be a denial of complete humanity to some person or group. It is easy to surmise hostile or negative attitudes in the out-group and to overlook the fact that it too is bound by moral feelings and restrictions. The person against whom



we are prejudiced never has complete human status in our eyes and is always felt in some manner to be a brute, trickster, or an enemy. It is, of course, well known that such feelings are not pinned alone to physical characteristics, but may also be attached to cultural differences, although it is questionable whether the term "race" prejudice should be used in this case.

In the case of the Negro such prejudice centers around the physical features which permit him to be marked off as a caste man. Its function is to keep the Negro in his caste position and it is therefore to be viewed as a defensive-aggressive measure on the part of the white caste. White prejudice is said constantly to be incited by "outrages" committed by the lower-caste group. These "outrages" usually consist of some claim for equality which is perceived as aggressive by the upper caste. Behavior which would be unobjectionable in an upper-caste member is often perceived as outrageously contumacious when done by a lower-caste man. In sum, the fact seems to be that aggression from those against whom we are prejudiced (hostile) is disproportionately felt. Race prejudice is sometimes said to be "caught" out of the social atmosphere; but the tendency to derogate others must be present from the outset and it is merely systematized and given an object and a social excuse when the person comes into the formal circle of race prejudice attitudes. Persons with little need to prop self-esteem through the pain and humiliation of others may participate in formal prejudice patterns, but they will participate without much affect and as a mere convention.

It seems again, in the case of race prejudice, that our formal cultural explanations do not really satisfy, although they account for the event well enough in their own terms. Race prejudice is an emotional fact and must be connected with the rest of the emotional life of each individual who experiences it. In the attempt to add something to the perception of our problem, several factors must be considered. The first is the life history of the individual. We must remember that the taking on of culture forms is not such a smooth process as it often seems. Culture means renunciation of impulse freedom as well as expression and this renunciation is uniformly perceived as a frustration. Frustration is experienced in connection with all the simplest limitations placed on the freedom of the child, in such matters, for example, as weaning or cleanliness training, and in the prohibitions placed on running or walking, on talking, on revenge, and on the hopeless love aspirations of the child. The character of the grown-up person is a record of these frustrations and the reactions to them. We know also that,

when frustration is experienced, there is uniformly called into action an aggressive tendency whose object is to restore the gratifying state of affairs or master the gratifying object. For the most part, however, this aggression is useless since the small child faces the bulwarked might of the society which is immune to his attacks. The result is that probably every mature person carries some generalized hostility toward the milieu, a hostility which cannot find a legitimate object on which it may be vented. It is suggested that, when society does indicate an object, like the Negro whom one may detest with a good conscience, much of this irrational affect is drained off. . . .

The above is a generalized factor which will be present in all individuals on the basis of life experience, although by no means with equal strength since different individuals are frustrated in different degrees and are therefore aggressive in different degrees. A further explanation which would account for the reasonless aggression manifested in race prejudice derives from the daily life of adult people. It runs as follows: we all tend to overestimate the sympathy and comity present in personal relationships and we are all taught to disavow so far as possible hostile motives toward those we love. As a result, the amount of hostility engendered by daily life experience is altogether underestimated. For example, professional and business rivalries may give rise to intense resentment against colleagues which one dare not express. The daily humiliations of an insurance agent may leave a psyche boiling with unsuitable hostility. The normal routine of life is limiting to all and exceedingly irritating to many. Monogamous institutions are certainly perceived by large numbers of individuals as a chronic frustration situation. Changes of a national character, like defeat in war or attacks on one's social class, may be felt as frustrations by great numbers of persons. Here again are the sources of considerable hostility which may not be expressed against the actually exciting objects. When a particular group such as Negroes are designated by our society as objects who may legitimately be despised, the fact is very likely to be welcome to many hard-pressed individuals; social disapproval on aggression is so common and the loopholes so few that it is a case of any target in a storm. This is plainly only a more detailed account of the value of the out-group in helping to maintain sympathy and coöperation within the we-group. Just because we underestimate the frustrating character of daily life and the annoyance we experience at these frustrations do we find race prejudice so mysterious. Our hypothesis is that in the case of race prejudice these vague aggressions are

centered on the target of prejudice and are there expressively released. If this be true, one may say that a lower caste is of particular value to a society in case a suitable target for out-group hostility is either not available or too dangerous to attack. Our puzzlement about race prejudice is an aspect of our unrealistic perception of the nature of our immediate social relationships; we deny appropriate aggression in them and experience it spurtling out through the socially permitted derogation of the inferior group. The "visibility" of the Negro in this case is the sign that tells the prejudiced person whom to hate and makes easy and consistent discrimination possible. Real competition gives an added reason for hostility and exploitation of the group against which one is prejudiced and adds a fear of retaliation to the picture.

The matter could be summarized somewhat as follows: cultural restrictions in childhood and the limitations of daily life in adulthood provide numerous frustrations for every individual; hostility is aroused in response to these frustrations. If expressed, this hostility would tend to break up in-group solidarity; so it is systematically discouraged and suppressed. One of the methods of discouragement is to pretend that such hostility does not exist. Though repressed it is not extirpated but utilizes such permissive social formations as race prejudice traditions to vent itself safely on an object. Race prejudice is mysterious because no real occasion is required for its expression; the object does not necessarily have to offend or frustrate. On the contrary there are deflected to the object against which one is prejudiced the hostilities that should be directed toward nearer and dearer persons. Our conception works with three key concepts. First a generalized or "free-floating" aggression which is derived from reactions to frustration and suppression within the "we-group." It can be thought of as a tendency to kick, hit, scorn, or derogate someone or something if one could only find out what. A second necessity is that of a permissive social pattern. This must exist in order to lift the in-group taboos on hostility. The permissive pattern isolates a group within the society which may be disliked. Usually it is a defenseless group. In the South the caste rôle of the Negro is the pattern which permits white people systematically to derogate him. The permissive pattern often comes down from earlier days, although it can also be invented on the spot or by analogy with a group against which one is already prejudiced. The third essential in race prejudice is that the object must be uniformly identifiable. We have to be able to recognize those whom we may dislike. This stipulation is met by the physical or cultural marks which make the object of race prejudice "visible." In our sense race prejudice is always

irrational; if antagonism can be sufficiently explained by real, personal, or social rivalry we do not talk of "prejudice." There are, of course, other ways of utilizing or managing the aggression which can be expressed in prejudice against a minority group; they include, for example, using it for constructive alteration of real life conditions, through the war pattern, or by turning it on the self as in neurosis.





THE ANATOMY OF SOCIETY:  
COMMUNITY AND POLITY

4. IDEAL VALUES OF A DEMOCRATIC POLITY



## A. V. DICEY

**A**LBERT VENN DICEY (1835–1922), a jurist and scholar of international reputation, taught for twenty-seven years at Oxford. In 1870 his book *On Parties* appeared. Although a keen party politician, Dicey never entered Parliament. But from the time of the Home Rule Bill in 1886 he devoted all of his debating and literary skills to the cause of Liberal Unionism.

In 1879 Dicey's reputation as a legal scholar was established by his treatise on *Domicil*, which he embodied later in a larger book, *The Conflict of Laws*. In 1882 he was appointed as the first Vinerian Professor of English Law, and three years later his classic lectures on the "Law of the Constitution" were published. This work, *Introduction to the Study of the Law of the Constitution*, from which the following selections were taken, has since that date appeared in nine editions. In 1909 Dicey retired from teaching and became professor emeritus.

At the turn of the century Dicey delivered a series of lectures to the students of the Harvard Law School which were published in 1905 under the title, *Lectures on the Relation between Law and Public Opinion in England during the Nineteenth Century*. This remarkable work not only traced the developments of English law in the nineteenth century, but dramatically illustrated the social and political dilemmas of liberalism. Dicey saw the growth of "collectivism" as a reflection of the subtle interrelations among the economic, social, religious, and political issues composing the complex fabric of nineteenth-century society—a world which has directly contributed to the making of our contemporary civilization and its persistent issues.



### INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF THE LAW OF THE CONSTITUTION

#### Part II

#### CHAPTER IV: THE RULE OF LAW; ITS NATURE AND GENERAL APPLICATIONS

Two features have at all times since the Norman Conquest characterised the political institutions of England.

The first of these features is the omnipotence or undisputed supremacy

---

This selection has been reprinted from A. V. Dicey, *Introduction to the Study of the Law of the Constitution* (pp. 183–205, Copyright by Macmillan and Company, Ltd., London, 9th ed., 1939) by permission of the publisher and St. Martin's Press, Inc., New York.



throughout the whole country of the central government. This authority of the state or the nation was during the earlier periods of our history represented by the power of the Crown. The King was the source of law and the maintainer of order. The maxim of the courts, *tout fuit in luy et vient de lui al commencement*,<sup>1</sup> was originally the expression of an actual and undoubted fact. This royal supremacy has now passed into [the] sovereignty of Parliament. . . .

The second of these features, which is closely connected with the first, is the rule or supremacy of law. This peculiarity of our polity is well expressed in the old saw of the courts, "*La ley est le plus haute inheritance, que le roy ad; car par la ley il même et toutes ses sujets sont rulés, et si la ley ne fuit; nul roi, et nul inheritance sera.*"<sup>2</sup>

This supremacy of the law, or the security given under the English constitution to the rights of individuals looked at from various points of view, forms the subject of . . . this treatise.

Foreign observers of English manners, such for example as Voltaire, de Lolme, de Tocqueville, or Gneist, have been far more struck than have Englishmen themselves with the fact that England is a country governed, as is scarcely any other part of Europe, under the rule of law; and admiration or astonishment at the legality of English habits and feeling is nowhere better expressed than in a curious passage from de Tocqueville's writings, which compares the Switzerland and the England of 1836 in respect of the spirit which pervades their laws and manners.

I am not about . . . to compare Switzerland with the United States, but with Great Britain. When you examine the two countries, or even if you only pass through them, you perceive, in my judgment, the most astonishing differences between them. Take it all in all, England seems to be much more republican than the Helvetic Republic. The principal differences are found in the institutions of the two countries, and especially in their customs (*moeurs*).

1. In almost all the Swiss Cantons liberty of the press is a very recent thing.
2. In almost all of them individual liberty is by no means completely guaranteed, and a man may be arrested administratively and detained in prison without much formality.
3. The courts have not, generally speaking, a perfectly independent position.
4. In all the Cantons trial by jury is unknown.
5. In several Cantons the people were thirty-eight years ago entirely without political rights. Aargau, Thurgau, Tessin, Vaud, and parts of the Cantons of Zurich and Berne were in this condition.

<sup>1</sup> [All was in him and comes from him at the beginning.]

<sup>2</sup> [The law is the highest inheritance that the king has; for he and all his subjects are ruled by the law and if there were no law, neither the king nor the inheritance would be.]

The preceding observations apply even more strongly to customs than to institutions.

i. In many of the Swiss Cantons the majority of the citizens are quite without taste or desire for *self-government*, and have not acquired the habit of it. In any crisis they interest themselves about their affairs, but you never see in them the thirst for political rights and the craving to take part in public affairs which seem to torment Englishmen throughout their lives.

ii. The Swiss abuse the liberty of the press on account of its being a recent form of liberty, and Swiss newspapers are much more *revolutionary* and much less *practical* than English newspapers.

iii. The Swiss seem still to look upon associations from much the same point of view as the French, that is to say, they consider them as a means of revolution, and not as a slow and sure method for obtaining redress of wrongs. The art of associating and of making use of the right of association is but little understood in Switzerland.

iv. The Swiss do not show the love of justice which is such a strong characteristic of the English. Their courts have no place in the political arrangements of the country, and exert no influence on public opinion. The love of justice, the peaceful and legal introduction of the judge into the domain of politics, are perhaps the most standing characteristics of a free people.

v. Finally, and this really embraces all the rest, the Swiss do not show at bottom that respect for justice, that love of law, that dislike of using force, without which no free nation can exist, which strikes strangers so forcibly in England.

I sum up these impressions in a few words.

Whoever travels in the United States is involuntarily and instinctively so impressed with the fact that the spirit of liberty and the taste for it have pervaded all the habits of the American people, that he cannot conceive of them under any but a Republican government. In the same way it is impossible to think of the English as living under any but a free government. But if violence were to destroy the Republican institutions in most of the Swiss Cantons, it would be by no means certain that after rather a short state of transition the people would not grow accustomed to the loss of liberty. In the United States and in England there seems to be more liberty in the customs than in the laws of the people. In Switzerland there seems to be more liberty in the laws than in the customs of the country.

De Tocqueville's language has a twofold bearing on our present topic. His words point in the clearest manner to the rule, predominance, or supremacy of law as the distinguishing characteristic of English institutions. They further direct attention to the extreme vagueness of a trait of national character which is as noticeable as it is hard to portray. De Tocqueville, we see, is clearly perplexed how to define a feature of English manners of which he at once recognises the existence; he mingles or confuses together the habit of self-government, the love of order, the respect for justice and a legal turn of mind. All these sentiments are intimately allied, but they cannot without confusion be identified with each other. If, however, a critic as acute as de

Tocqueville found a difficulty in describing one of the most marked peculiarities of English life, we may safely conclude that we ourselves, whenever we talk of Englishmen as loving the government of law, or of the supremacy of law as being a characteristic of the English constitution, are using words which, though they possess a real significance, are nevertheless to most persons who employ them full of vagueness and ambiguity. If therefore we are ever to appreciate the full import of the idea denoted by the term "rule, supremacy, or predominance of law," we must first determine precisely what we mean by such expressions when we apply them to the British constitution.

When we say that the supremacy or the rule of law is a characteristic of the English constitution, we generally include under one expression at least three distinct though kindred conceptions.

We mean, in the first place, that no man is punishable or can be lawfully made to suffer in body or goods except for a distinct breach of law established in the ordinary legal manner before the ordinary courts of the land. In this sense the rule of law is contrasted with every system of government based on the exercise by persons in authority of wide, arbitrary, or discretionary powers of constraint.

Modern Englishmen may at first feel some surprise that the "rule of law" (in the sense in which we are now using the term) should be considered as in any way a peculiarity of English institutions, since, at the present day, it may seem to be not so much the property of any one nation as a trait common to every civilised and orderly state. Yet, even if we confine our observation to the existing condition of Europe, we shall soon be convinced that the "rule of law" even in this narrow sense is peculiar to England, or to those countries which, like the United States of America, have inherited English traditions. In almost every continental community the executive exercises far wider discretionary authority in the matter of arrest, of temporary imprisonment, of expulsion from its territory, and the like, than is either legally claimed or in fact exerted by the government in England; and a study of European politics now and again reminds English readers that wherever there is discretion there is room for arbitrariness, and that in a republic no less than under a monarchy discretionary authority on the part of the government must mean insecurity for legal freedom on the part of its subjects.

If, however, we confined our observation to the Europe of today (1908), we might well say that in most European countries the rule of law is now nearly as well established as in England, and that private individuals at any rate who do not meddle in politics have little to fear, as long as they keep the law, either from the Government or from any one else; and we might

therefore feel some difficulty in understanding how it ever happened that to foreigners the absence of arbitrary power on the part of the Crown, of the executive, and of every other authority in England, has always seemed a striking feature, we might almost say the essential characteristic, of the English constitution.

Our perplexity is entirely removed by carrying back our minds to the time when the English constitution began to be criticised and admired by foreign thinkers. During the eighteenth century many of the continental governments were far from oppressive, but there was no continental country where men were secure from arbitrary power. The singularity of England was not so much the goodness or the leniency as the legality of the English system of government. When Voltaire came to England—and Voltaire represented the feeling of his age—his predominant sentiment clearly was that he had passed out of the realm of despotism to a land where the laws might be harsh, but where men were ruled by law and not by caprice. He had good reason to know the difference. In 1717 Voltaire was sent to the Bastille for a poem which he had not written, of which he did not know the author, and with the sentiment of which he did not agree. What adds to the oddity, in English eyes, of the whole transaction is that the Regent treated the affair as a sort of joke, and, so to speak, “chaffed” the supposed author of the satire “*I have seen*” on being about to pay a visit to a prison which he “had not seen.” In 1725 Voltaire, then the literary hero of his country, was lured off from the table of a Duke, and was thrashed by lackeys in the presence of their noble master; he was unable to obtain either legal or honourable redress, and because he complained of this outrage, paid a second visit to the Bastille. This indeed was the last time in which he was lodged within the walls of a French gaol, but his whole life was a series of contests with arbitrary power, and nothing but his fame, his deftness, his infinite resource, and ultimately his wealth, saved him from penalties far more severe than temporary imprisonment. Moreover, the price at which Voltaire saved his property and his life was after all exile from France. Whoever wants to see how exceptional a phenomenon was that supremacy of law which existed in England during the eighteenth century should read such a book as Morley’s *Life of Diderot*. The effort lasting for twenty-two years to get the *Encyclopédie* published was a struggle on the part of all the distinguished literary men in France to obtain utterance for their thoughts. It is hard to say whether the difficulties or the success of the contest bear the strongest witness to the wayward arbitrariness of the French Government.

Royal lawlessness was not peculiar to specially detestable monarchs such



as Louis the Fifteenth: it was inherent in the French system of administration. An idea prevails that Louis the Sixteenth at least was not an arbitrary, as he assuredly was not a cruel ruler. But it is an error to suppose that up to 1789 anything like the supremacy of law existed under the French monarchy. The folly, the grievances, and the mystery of the Chevalier d'Eon made as much noise little more than a century ago as the imposture of the Claimant in our own day. The memory of these things is not in itself worth reviving. What does deserve to be kept in remembrance is that in 1778, in the days of Johnson, of Adam Smith, of Gibbon, of Cowper, of Burke, and of Mansfield, during the continuance of the American war and within eleven years of the assembling of the States General, a brave officer and a distinguished diplomatist could for some offence still unknown, without trial and without conviction, be condemned to undergo a penance and disgrace which could hardly be rivalled by the fanciful caprice of the torments inflicted by Oriental despotism.

Nor let it be imagined that during the latter part of the eighteenth century the government of France was more arbitrary than that of other countries. To entertain such a supposition is to misconceive utterly the condition of the continent. In France, law and public opinion counted for a great deal more than in Spain, in the petty States of Italy, or in the Principalities of Germany. All the evils of despotism which attracted the notice of the world in a great kingdom such as France existed under worse forms in countries where, just because the evil was so much greater, it attracted the less attention. The power of the French monarch was criticised more severely than the lawlessness of a score of petty tyrants, not because the French King ruled more despotically than other crowned heads, but because the French people appeared from the eminence of the nation to have a special claim to freedom, and because the ancient kingdom of France was the typical representative of despotism. This explains the thrill of enthusiasm with which all Europe greeted the fall of the Bastille. When the fortress was taken, there were not ten prisoners within its walls; at that very moment hundreds of debtors languished in English gaols. Yet all England hailed the triumph of the French populace with a fervour which to Englishmen of the twentieth century is at first sight hardly comprehensible. Reflection makes clear enough the cause of a feeling which spread through the length and breadth of the civilised world. The Bastille was the outward and visible sign of lawless power. Its fall was felt, and felt truly, to herald in for the rest of Europe that rule of law which already existed in England.

We mean in the second place, when we speak of the "rule of law" as a

characteristic of our country, not only that with us no man is above the law, but (what is a different thing) that here every man, whatever be his rank or condition, is subject to the ordinary law of the realm and amenable to the jurisdiction of the ordinary tribunals.

In England the idea of legal equality, or of the universal subjection of all classes to one law administered by the ordinary courts, has been pushed to its utmost limit. With us every official, from the Prime Minister down to a constable or a collector of taxes, is under the same responsibility for every act done without legal justification as any other citizen. The Reports abound with cases in which officials have been brought before the courts, and made, in their personal capacity, liable to punishment, or to the payment of damages, for acts done in their official character but in excess of their lawful authority. A colonial governor, a secretary of state, a military officer, and all subordinates, though carrying out the commands of their official superiors, are as responsible for any act which the law does not authorise as is any private and unofficial person. Officials, such for example as soldiers or clergymen of the Established Church, are, it is true, in England as elsewhere, subject to laws which do not affect the rest of the nation, and are in some instances amenable to tribunals which have no jurisdiction over their fellow-countrymen; officials, that is to say, are to a certain extent governed under what may be termed official law. But this fact is in no way inconsistent with the principle that all men are in England subject to the law of the realm; for though a soldier or a clergyman incurs from his position legal liabilities from which other men are exempt, he does not (speaking generally) escape thereby from the duties of an ordinary citizen.

An Englishman naturally imagines that the rule of law (in the sense in which we are now using the term) is a trait common to all civilised societies. But this supposition is erroneous. Most European nations had indeed, by the end of the eighteenth century, passed through that stage of development (from which England emerged before the end of the sixteenth century) when nobles, priests, and others could defy the law. But it is even now far from universally true that in continental countries all persons are subject to one and the same law, or that the courts are supreme throughout the state. If we take France as the type of a continental state, we may assert, with substantial accuracy, that officials—under which word should be included all persons employed in the service of the state—are, or have been, in their official capacity, to some extent exempted from the ordinary law of the land, protected from the jurisdiction of the ordinary tribunals, and subject in certain respects only to official law administered by official bodies.

There remains yet a third and a different sense in which the "rule of law" or the predominance of the legal spirit may be described as a special attribute of English institutions. We may say that the constitution is pervaded by the rule of law on the ground that the general principles of the constitution (as for example the right to personal liberty, or the right of public meeting) are with us the result of judicial decisions determining the rights of private persons in particular cases brought before the courts; whereas under many foreign constitutions the security (such as it is) given to the rights of individuals results, or appears to result, from the general principles of the constitution.

This is one portion at least of the fact vaguely hinted at in the current but misleading statement that

the constitution has not been made but has "grown." This dictum, if taken literally, is absurd. Political institutions (however the proposition may be at times ignored) are the work of men, owe their origin and their whole existence to human will. Men did not wake up on a summer morning and find them sprung up. Neither do they resemble trees, which, once planted, are "aye growing" while men "are sleeping." In every stage of their existence they are made what they are by human voluntary agency. [J. S. Mill.]

Yet, though this is so, the dogma that the form of a government is a sort of spontaneous growth so closely bound up with the life of a people that we can hardly treat it as a product of human will and energy, does, though in a loose and inaccurate fashion, bring into view the fact that some polities, and among them the English constitution, have not been created at one stroke, and, far from being the result of legislation, in the ordinary sense of that term, are the fruit of contests carried on in the courts on behalf of the rights of individuals. Our constitution, in short, is a judge-made constitution, and it bears on its face all the features, good and bad, of judge-made law.

Hence flow noteworthy distinctions between the constitution of England and the constitutions of most foreign countries.

There is in the English constitution an absence of those declarations or definitions of rights so dear to foreign constitutionalists. Such principles, moreover, as you can discover in the English constitution are, like all maxims established by judicial legislation, mere generalisations drawn either from the decisions or dicta of judges, or from statutes which, being passed to meet special grievances, bear a close resemblance to judicial decisions, and are in effect judgments pronounced by the High Court of Parliament. To put what is really the same thing in a somewhat different shape, the relation of the rights of individuals to the principles of the constitution is not quite the

same in countries like Belgium, where the constitution is the result of a legislative act, as it is in England, where the constitution itself is based upon legal decisions. In Belgium, which may be taken as a type of countries possessing a constitution formed by a deliberate act of legislation, you may say with truth that the rights of individuals to personal liberty flow from or are secured by the constitution. In England the right to individual liberty is part of the constitution, because it is secured by the decisions of the courts, extended or confirmed as they are by the Habeas Corpus Acts. If it be allowable to apply the formulas of logic to questions of law, the difference in this matter between the constitution of Belgium and the English constitution may be described by the statement that in Belgium individual rights are deductions drawn from the principles of the constitution, whilst in England the so-called principles of the constitution are inductions or generalisations based upon particular decisions pronounced by the courts as to the rights of given individuals.

This is of course a merely formal difference. Liberty is as well secured in Belgium as in England, and as long as this is so it matters nothing whether we say that individuals are free from all risk of arbitrary arrest, because liberty of person is guaranteed by the constitution, or that the right to personal freedom, or in other words to protection from arbitrary arrest, forms part of the constitution because it is secured by the ordinary law of the land. But though this merely formal distinction is in itself of no moment, provided always that the rights of individuals are really secure, the question whether the right to personal freedom or the right to freedom of worship is likely to be secure does depend a good deal upon the answer to the inquiry whether the persons who consciously or unconsciously build up the constitution of their country begin with definitions or declarations of rights, or with the contrivance of remedies by which rights may be enforced or secured. Now, most foreign constitution-makers have begun with declarations of rights. For this they have often been in nowise to blame. Their course of action has more often than not been forced upon them by the stress of circumstances, and by the consideration that to lay down general principles of law is the proper and natural function of legislators. But any knowledge of history suffices to show that foreign constitutionalists have, while occupied in defining rights, given insufficient attention to the absolute necessity for the provision of adequate remedies by which the rights they proclaimed might be enforced. The Constitution of 1791 proclaimed liberty of conscience, liberty of the press, the right of public meeting, the responsibility of government officials. But there never was a period in the recorded annals of mankind



when each and all of these rights were so insecure, one might almost say so completely non-existent, as at the height of the French Revolution. And an observer may well doubt whether a good number of these liberties or rights are even now so well protected under the French Republic as under the English Monarchy. On the other hand, there runs through the English constitution that inseparable connection between the means of enforcing a right and the right to be enforced which is the strength of judicial legislation. The saw, *ubi jus ibi remedium*,<sup>3</sup> becomes from this point of view something much more important than a mere tautologous proposition. In its bearing upon constitutional law, it means that the Englishmen whose labours gradually framed the complicated set of laws and institutions which we call the Constitution, fixed their minds far more intently on providing remedies for the enforcement of particular rights or (what is merely the same thing looked at from the other side) for averting definite wrongs, than upon any declaration of the Rights of Man or of Englishmen. The Habeas Corpus Acts declare no principle and define no rights, but they are for practical purposes worth a hundred constitutional articles guaranteeing individual liberty. Nor let it be supposed that this connection between rights and remedies which depends upon the spirit of law pervading English institutions is inconsistent with the existence of a written constitution, or even with the existence of constitutional declarations of rights. The Constitution of the United States and the constitutions of the separate States are embodied in written or printed documents, and contain declarations of rights.<sup>4</sup> But the statesmen of America have shown unrivalled skill in providing means for giving legal security to the rights declared by American constitutions. The rule of law is as marked a feature of the United States as of England.

The fact, again, that in many foreign countries the rights of individuals, e.g. to personal freedom, depend upon the constitution, whilst in England the law of the constitution is little else than a generalisation of the rights

<sup>3</sup> [*Where there is a right there is a (legal) remedy.*]

<sup>4</sup> The Petition of Right, and the Bill of Rights, as also the American Declarations of Rights, contain, it may be said, proclamations of general principles which resemble the declarations of rights known to foreign constitutionalists, and especially the celebrated Declaration of the Rights of Man of 1789. But the English and American Declarations on the one hand, and foreign declarations of rights on the other, though bearing an apparent resemblance to each other, are at bottom remarkable rather by way of contrast than of similarity. The Petition of Right and the Bill of Rights are not so much "declarations of rights" in the foreign sense of the term, as judicial condemnations of claims or practices on the part of the Crown, which are thereby pronounced illegal. It will be found that every, or nearly every, clause in the two celebrated documents negatives some distinct claim made and put into force on behalf of the prerogative. No doubt the Declarations contained in the American constitutions have a real similarity to the continental declarations of rights. They are the product of eighteenth-century ideas; they have, however, it is submitted, the distinct purpose of legally controlling the action of the legislature by the Articles of the Constitution. . . .

which the courts secure to individuals, has this important result. The general rights guaranteed by the constitution may be, and in foreign countries constantly are, suspended. They are something extraneous to and independent of the ordinary course of the law. The declaration of the Belgian constitution, that individual liberty is "guaranteed," betrays a way of looking at the rights of individuals very different from the way in which such rights are regarded by English lawyers. We can hardly say that one right is more guaranteed than another. Freedom from arbitrary arrest, the right to express one's opinion on all matters subject to the liability to pay compensation for libellous or to suffer punishment for seditious or blasphemous statements, and the right to enjoy one's own property, seem to Englishmen all to rest upon the same basis, namely, on the law of the land. To say that the "constitution guaranteed" one class of rights more than the other would be to an Englishman an unnatural or a senseless form of speech. In the Belgian constitution the words have a definite meaning. They imply that no law invading personal freedom can be passed without a modification of the constitution made in the special way in which alone the constitution can be legally changed or amended. This, however, is not the point to which our immediate attention should be directed. The matter to be noted is, that where the right to individual freedom is a result deduced from the principles of the constitution, the idea readily occurs that the right is capable of being suspended or taken away. Where, on the other hand, the right to individual freedom is part of the constitution because it is inherent in the ordinary law of the land, the right is one which can hardly be destroyed without a thorough revolution in the institutions and manners of the nation. The so-called "suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act" bears, it is true, a certain similarity to what is called in foreign countries "suspending the constitutional guarantees." But, after all, a statute suspending the Habeas Corpus Act falls very far short of what its popular name seems to imply; and though a serious measure enough, is not, in reality, more than a suspension of one particular remedy for the protection of personal freedom. The Habeas Corpus Act may be suspended and yet Englishmen may enjoy almost all the rights of citizens. The constitution being based on the rule of law, the suspension of the constitution, as far as such a thing can be conceived possible, would mean with us nothing less than a revolution.

That "rule of law," then, which forms a fundamental principle of the constitution, has three meanings, or may be regarded from three different points of view.

It means, in the first place, the absolute supremacy or predominance of

regular law as opposed to the influence of arbitrary power, and excludes the existence of arbitrariness, of prerogative, or even of wide discretionary authority on the part of the government. Englishmen are ruled by the law, and by the law alone; a man may with us be punished for a breach of law, but he can be punished for nothing else.

It means, again, equality before the law, or the equal subjection of all classes to the ordinary law of the land administered by the ordinary law courts; the "rule of law" in this sense excludes the idea of any exemption of officials or others from the duty of obedience to the law which governs other citizens or from the jurisdiction of the ordinary tribunals; there can be with us nothing really corresponding to the "administrative law" (*droit administratif*) or the "administrative tribunals" (*tribunaux administratifs*) of France. The notion which lies at the bottom of the "administrative law" known to foreign countries is, that affairs or disputes in which the government or its servants are concerned are beyond the sphere of the civil courts and must be dealt with by special and more or less official bodies. This idea is utterly unknown to the law of England, and indeed is fundamentally inconsistent with our traditions and customs.

The "rule of law," lastly, may be used as a formula for expressing the fact that with us the law of the constitution, the rules which in foreign countries naturally form part of a constitutional code, are not the source but the consequence of the rights of individuals, as defined and enforced by the courts; that, in short, the principles of private law have with us been by the action of the courts and Parliament so extended as to determine the position of the Crown and of its servants; thus the constitution is the result of the ordinary law of the land. . . .

## L. T. HOBHOUSE

LEONARD TRELAWNY HOBHOUSE (1864–1929) was a distinguished contributor to the fields of philosophy, sociology, politics, and anthropology. As a student at Oxford his main interests were philosophy and science, and throughout his life he attempted to work out a philosophical system that would take into account evolutionary concepts. In 1889 he became interested in the movement known as the “New Unionism” in Britain, and his first book, which appeared in 1893, was *The Labour Movement*. In 1896 he published *The Theory of Knowledge*, a work which was a reaction against the idealism then dominant among Oxford philosophers. He worked as a journalist on *The Manchester Guardian* for five years after 1897 and, after three years as secretary of the Free Trade Union from 1903 to 1905, he became political editor of *The Tribune* in 1906. A year after the appearance of *Morals in Evolution* (1906), a study in comparative ethics, he became the first professor of sociology at the University of London. He wrote *Social Evolution and Political Theory* and *Liberalism* in 1911, and in 1913 *Development and Purpose*, an attempt at a philosophy of evolution, which he revised in 1927. In 1918 he published *The Metaphysical Theory of the State*, a sharp criticism of “the Hegelian theory of the god-state,” which Hobhouse regarded as the foundation of the doctrines of German autocracy and militarism. After the war, he produced a complete system of sociology, *The Rational Good* (1921), *The Elements of Social Justice* (1922), and *Social Development* (1924).

During his whole career as a writer and thinker, one of Hobhouse’s principal concerns was to continue the reworking of the doctrines of classical liberalism which had been undertaken by John Stuart Mill in the middle of the nineteenth century. His view of social life as a developing organic whole, together with his sympathy for many of the aspirations of the working class, led him to reject the atomistic individualism, the *laissez-faire* doctrines, and the purely negative conception of the role of the state advanced by the pioneers of liberalism in their struggle against outmoded feudal, mercantilist, and authoritarian restrictions upon individual freedom. Building upon the foundations laid down by Mill and T. H. Green (1836–1882), Hobhouse insisted that liberty and restraint are not simply antithetical and that liberty and equality are complementary rather than opposed principles. Social freedom, which in his view was the only freedom possible of attainment by men who live together in social groups, he defined as “the freedom to choose among those lines of activity which do not involve injury to others.” Restraint applied to actions that do injure others is thus a contribution and not a hindrance to the wider enjoyment of freedom. While coercion cannot compel morality, it can, by securing outward conformity, restrain one man from obstructing another man or from interfering with the “general good.”

Hobhouse was able to use his liberalism to defend a large measure of state action relating to wages, hours, working conditions, and industrial organization, as well as an elaborate program of state support for education, health, and general



welfare. His is an organic view of society, and he insists that the individual's rights and his duties are alike defined by the common good, while this common good, in turn, is a good in which each man has a share. The common good is not a mysterious entity transcending the individuals in the group and their well-being. One of his fundamental assumptions is that, while the older liberals were wrong in postulating the existence of a natural harmony between the interests of each individual and those of society as a whole, there is "a possible ethical harmony, to which, partly by discipline, partly by the improvement of the conditions of life, men might attain, and that in such attainment lies the social ideal."

The following selection has been taken from Hobhouse's *Liberalism* (1911).



## LIBERALISM

### CHAPTER VI: THE HEART OF LIBERALISM

The teaching of Mill brings us close to the heart of Liberalism. We learn from him, in the first place, that liberty is no mere formula of law, or of the restriction of law. There may be a tyranny of custom, a tyranny of opinion, even a tyranny of circumstance, as real as any tyranny of government and more pervasive. Nor does liberty rest on the self-assertion of the individual. There is scope abundant for Liberalism and illiberalism in personal conduct. Nor is liberty opposed to discipline, to organization, to strenuous conviction as to what is true and just. Nor is it to be identified with tolerance of opposed opinions. The Liberal does not meet opinions which he conceives to be false with toleration, as though they did not matter. He meets them with justice, and exacts for them a fair hearing as though they mattered just as much as his own. He is always ready to put his own convictions to the proof, not because he doubts them, but because he believes in them. For, both as to that which he holds for true and as to that which he holds for false, he believes that one final test applies. Let error have free play, and one of two things will happen. Either as it develops, as its implications and consequences become clear, some elements of truth will appear within it. They will separate themselves out; they will go to enrich the stock of human ideas; they will add something to the truth which he himself mistakenly took as final; they will serve to explain the root of the error; for error itself is generally a truth misconceived, and it is only when it is explained that it is finally and satisfactorily confuted. Or, in the alternative, no element of

---

This selection has been reprinted from L. T. Hobhouse, *Liberalism* (pp. 116-165, Oxford University Press, London and New York, 1945) by permission of the publisher.

truth will appear. In that case the more fully the error is understood, the more patiently it is followed up in all the windings of its implications and consequences, the more thoroughly it will refute itself. The cancerous growth cannot be extirpated by the knife. The root is always left, and it is only the evolution of the self-protecting anti-toxin that works the final cure. Exactly parallel is the logic of truth. The more the truth is developed in all its implications, the greater is the opportunity of detecting any element of error that it may contain; and, conversely, if no error appears, the more completely does it establish itself as the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Liberalism applies the wisdom of Gamaliel in no spirit of indifference, but in the full conviction of the potency of truth. If this thing be of man, i.e. if it is not rooted in actual verity, it will come to nought. If it be of God, let us take care that we be not found fighting against God.

Divergences of opinion, of character, of conduct are not unimportant matters. They may be most serious matters, and no one is called on in the name of Liberalism to overlook their seriousness. There are, for example, certain disqualifications inherent in the profession of certain opinions. It is not illiberal for a Protestant in choosing a tutor for his son to reject a conscientious Roman Catholic who avows that all his teaching is centered on the doctrine of his Church. It would be illiberal to reject the same man for the specific purpose of teaching arithmetic, if he avowed that he had no intention of using his position for the purpose of religious propagandism. For the former purpose the divergence of religious opinion is an inherent disqualification. It negates the object propounded, which is the general education of the boy on lines in which the father believes. For the latter purpose the opinion is no disqualification. The devout Catholic accepts the multiplication table, and can impart his knowledge without reference to the infallibility of the Pope. To refuse to employ him is to impose an extraneous penalty on his convictions. It is not illiberal for an editor to decline the services of a member of the opposite party as a leader writer, or even as a political reviewer or in any capacity in which his opinions would affect his work. It is illiberal to reject him as a compositor or as a clerk, or in any capacity in which his opinions would not affect his work for the paper. It is not illiberal to refuse a position of trust to the man whose record shows that he is likely to abuse such a trust. It is illiberal—and this the "moralist" has yet to learn—to punish a man who has done a wrong in one relation by excluding him from the performance of useful social functions for which he is perfectly fitted, by which he could at once serve society and re-establish his own self-respect. There may, however, yet come a time when Liberalism,

already recognized as a duty in religion and in politics, will take its true place at the centre of our ethical conceptions, and will be seen to have its application not only to him whom we conceive to be the teacher of false opinions, but to the man whom we hold a sinner.

The ground of Liberalism so understood is certainly not the view that a man's personal opinions are socially indifferent, nor that his personal morality matters nothing to others. So far as Mill rested his case on the distinction between self-regarding actions and actions that affect others, he was still dominated by the older individualism. We should frankly recognize that there is no side of a man's life which is unimportant to society, for whatever he is, does, or thinks may affect his own well-being, which is and ought to be matter of common concern, and may also directly or indirectly affect the thought, action, and character of those with whom he comes in contact. The underlying principle may be put in two ways. In the first place, the man is much more than his opinions and his actions. Carlyle and Sterling did not differ "except in opinion." To most of us that is just what difference means. Carlyle was aware that there was something much deeper, something that opinion just crassly formulates, and for the most part formulates inadequately, that is the real man. The real man is something more than is ever adequately expressed in terms which his fellows can understand; and just as his essential humanity lies deeper than all distinctions of rank, and class, and colour, and even, though in a different sense, of sex, so also it goes far below those comparatively external events which make one man figure as a saint and another as a criminal. This sense of ultimate oneness is the real meaning of equality, as it is the foundation of social solidarity and the bond which, if genuinely experienced, resists the disruptive force of all conflict, intellectual, religious and ethical.

But, further, while personal opinions and social institutions are like crystallized results, achievements that have been won by certain definite processes of individual or collective effort, human personality is that within which lives and grows, which can be destroyed but cannot be made, which cannot be taken to pieces and repaired, but can be placed under conditions in which it will flourish and expand, or, if it is diseased, under conditions in which it will heal itself by its own recuperative powers. The foundation of liberty is the idea of growth. Life is learning, but whether in theory or practice what a man genuinely learns is what he absorbs, and what he absorbs depends on the energy which he himself puts forth in response to his surroundings. Thus, to come at once to the real crux, the question of moral discipline, it is of course possible to reduce a man to order and prevent him

from being a nuisance to his neighbours by arbitrary control and harsh punishment. This may be to the comfort of the neighbours, as is admitted, but regarded as a moral discipline it is a contradiction in terms. It is doing less than nothing for the character of the man himself. It is merely crushing him, and unless his will is killed the effect will be seen if ever the superincumbent pressure is by chance removed. It is also possible, though it takes a much higher skill, to teach the same man to discipline himself, and this is to foster the development of will, of personality, of self control, or whatever we please to call that central harmonizing power which makes us capable of directing our own lives. Liberalism is the belief that society can safely be founded on this self-directing power of personality, that it is only on this foundation that a true community can be built, and that so established its foundations are so deep and so wide that there is no limit that we can place to the extent of the building. Liberty then becomes not so much a right of the individual as a necessity of society. It rests not on the claim of A to be let alone by B, but on the duty of B to treat A as a rational being. It is not right to let crime alone or to let error alone, but it is imperative to treat the criminal or the mistaken or the ignorant as beings capable of right and truth, and to lead them on instead of merely beating them down. The rule of liberty is just the application of rational method. It is the opening of the door to the appeal of reason, of imagination, of social feeling; and except through the response to this appeal there is no assured progress of society.

Now, I am not contending that these principles are free from difficulty in application. At many points they suggest difficulties both in theory and in practice, with some of which I shall try to deal later on. Nor, again, am I contending that freedom is the universal solvent, or the idea of liberty the sole foundation on which a true social philosophy can be based. On the contrary, freedom is only one side of social life. Mutual aid is not less important than mutual forbearance, the theory of collective action no less fundamental than the theory of personal freedom. But, in an inquiry where all the elements are so closely interwoven as they are in the field of social life, the point of departure becomes almost indifferent. Wherever we start we shall, if we are quite frank and consistent, be led on to look at the whole from some central point, and this, I think, has happened to us in working with the conception of "liberty." For, beginning with the right of the individual, and the antithesis between personal freedom and social control, we have been led on to a point at which we regard liberty as primarily a matter of social interest, as something flowing from the necessities of continuous advance in those regions of truth and of ethics which constitute the matters



of highest social concern. At the same time, we have come to look for the effect of liberty in the firmer establishment of social solidarity, as the only foundation on which such solidarity can securely rest. We have, in fact, arrived by a path of our own at that which is ordinarily described as the organic conception of the relation between the individual and society—a conception towards which Mill worked through his career, and which forms the starting-point of T. H. Green's philosophy alike in ethics and in politics.

The term organic is so much used and abused that it is best to state simply what it means. A thing is called organic when it is made up of parts which are quite distinct from one another, but which are destroyed or vitally altered when they are removed from the whole. Thus, the human body is organic because its life depends on the functions performed by many organs, while each of these organs depends in turn on the life of the body, perishing and decomposing if removed therefrom. Now, the organic view of society is equally simple. It means that, while the life of society is nothing but the life of individuals as they act one upon another, the life of the individual in turn would be something utterly different if he could be separated from society. A great deal of him would not exist at all. Even if he himself could maintain physical existence by the luck and skill of a Robinson Crusoe, his mental and moral being would, if it existed at all, be something quite different from anything that we know. By language, by training, by simply living with others, each of us absorbs into his system the social atmosphere that surrounds us. In particular, in the matter of rights and duties which is cardinal for Liberal theory, the relation of the individual to the community is everything. His rights and his duties are alike defined by the common good. What, for example, is my right? On the face of it, it is something that I claim. But a mere claim is nothing. I might claim anything and everything. If my claim is of right it is because it is sound, well grounded, in the judgment of an impartial observer. But an impartial observer will not consider me alone. He will equally weigh the opposed claims of others. He will take us in relation to one another, that is to say, as individuals involved in a social relationship. Further, if his decision is in any sense a rational one, it must rest on a principle of some kind; and again, as a rational man, any principle which he asserts he must found on some good result which it serves or embodies, and as an impartial man he must take the good of everyone affected into account. That is to say, he must found his judgment on the common good. An individual right, then, cannot conflict with the common good, nor could any right exist apart from the common good.

The argument might seem to make the individual too subservient to so-

ciety. But this is to forget the other side of the original supposition. Society consists wholly of persons. It has no distinct personality separate from and superior to those of its members. It has, indeed, a certain collective life and character. The British nation is a unity with a life of its own. But the unity is constituted by certain ties that bind together all British subjects, which ties are in the last resort feelings and ideas, sentiments of patriotism, of kinship, a common pride, and a thousand more subtle sentiments that bind together men who speak a common language, have behind them a common history, and understand one another as they can understand no one else. The British nation is not a mysterious entity over and above the forty odd millions of living souls who dwell together under a common law. Its life is their life, its well-being or ill-fortune their well-being or ill-fortune. Thus, the common good to which each man's rights are subordinate is a good in which each man has a share. This share consists in realizing his capacities of feeling, of loving, of mental and physical energy, and in realizing these he plays his part in the social life, or, in Green's phrase, he finds his own good in the common good.

Now, this phrase, it must be admitted, involves a certain assumption, which may be regarded as the fundamental postulate of the organic view of society. It implies that such a fulfilment or full development of personality is practically impossible not for one man only but for all members of a community. There must be a line of development open along which each can move in harmony with others. Harmony in the full sense would involve not merely absence of conflict but actual support. There must be for each, then, possibilities of development such as not merely to permit but actively to further the development of others. Now, the older economists conceived a natural harmony, such that the interests of each would, if properly understood and unchecked by outside interference, inevitably lead him in courses profitable to others and to society at large. . . . [This] assumption [is] too optimistic. The conception which we have now reached does not assume so much. It postulates, not that there is an actually existing harmony requiring nothing but prudence and coolness of judgment for its effective operation, but only that there is a possible ethical harmony, to which, partly by discipline, partly by the improvement of the conditions of life, men might attain, and that in such attainment lies the social ideal. To attempt the systematic proof of this postulate would take us into the field of philosophical first principles. It is the point at which the philosophy of politics comes into contact with that of ethics. It must suffice to say here that, just as the endeavor to establish a coherent system in the world of thought is the char-

acteristic of the rational impulse which lies at the root of science and philosophy, so the impulse to establish harmony in the world of feeling and action—a harmony which must include all those who think and feel—is of the essence of the rational impulse in the world of practice. To move towards harmony is the persistent impulse of the rational being, even if the goal lies always beyond the reach of accomplished effort.

These principles may appear very abstract, remote from practical life, and valueless for concrete teaching. But this remoteness is of the nature of first principles when taken without the connecting links that bind them to the details of experience. To find some of these links let us take up again our old Liberal principles, and see how they look in the light of the organic, or, as we may now call it, the harmonic conception. We shall readily see, to begin with, that the old idea of equality has its place. For the common good includes every individual. It is founded on personality, and postulates free scope for the development of personality in each member of the community. This is the foundation not only of equal rights before the law, but also of what is called equality of opportunity. It does not necessarily imply actual equality of treatment for all persons any more than it implies original equality of powers.<sup>1</sup> It does, I think, imply that whatever inequality of actual treatment, of income, rank, office, consideration, there be in a good social system, it would rest, not on the interest of the favoured individual as such, but on the common good. If the existence of millionaires on the one hand and of paupers on the other is just, it must be because such contrasts are the result of an economic system which upon the whole works out for the common good, the good of the pauper being included therein as well as the good of the millionaire; that is to say, that when we have well weighed the good and the evil of all parties concerned we can find no alternative open to us which could do better for the good of all. I am not for the moment either attacking or defending any economic system. I point out only that this is the position which according to the organic or harmonic view of society must be made good by any rational defense of grave inequality in the distribution of wealth. In relation to equality, indeed, it appears, oddly enough, that the harmonic principle can adopt wholesale, and even expand, one of the "Rights of Man" as formulated in 1789—"Social distinctions can only be founded upon common utility." If it is really just that A should be superior to B in wealth or power or position, it is only because when the good of all concerned is considered, among whom B is one, it turns out that

<sup>1</sup> An absurd misconception fostered principally by opponents of equality for controversial purposes.

there is a net gain in the arrangement as compared with any alternative that we can devise.

If we turn from equality to liberty, the general lines of argument have already been indicated. . . . It need only be repeated here that on the harmonic principle the fundamental importance of liberty rests on the nature of the "good" itself, and that whether we are thinking of the good of society or the good of the individual. The good is something attained by the development of the basic factors of personality, a development proceeding by the widening of ideas, the awakening of the imagination, the play of affection and passion, the strengthening and extension of rational control. As it is the development of these factors in each human being that makes his life worth having, so it is their harmonious interaction, the response of each to each, that makes of society a living whole. Liberty so interpreted cannot, as we have seen, dispense with restraint; restraint, however, is not an end but a means to an end, and one of the principal elements in that end is the enlargement of liberty.

But the collective activity of the community does not necessarily proceed by coercion or restraint. The more securely it is founded on freedom and general willing assent, the more it is free to work out all the achievements in which the individual is feeble or powerless while combined action is strong. Human progress, on whatever side we consider it, is found to be in the main social progress, the work of conscious or unconscious co-operation. In this work voluntary association plays a large and increasing part. But the State is one form of association among others, distinguished by its use of coercive power, by its supremacy, and by its claim to control all who dwell within its geographical limits. What the functions of such a form of association are to be we shall have to consider a little further in connection with the other questions which we have already raised. But that, in general, we are justified in regarding the State as one among many forms of human association for the maintenance and improvement of life is the general principle that we have to point out here, and this is the point at which we stand furthest from the older Liberalism. . . . [There is, however,] some reason for thinking that the older doctrines led, when carefully examined, to a more enlarged conception of State action than appeared on the surface; and we shall see more fully before we have done that the "positive" conception of the State which we have now reached not only involves no conflict with the true principle of personal liberty, but is necessary to its effective realization.

There is, in addition, one principle of historic Liberalism with which our



present conception of the State is in full sympathy. The conception of the common good as it has been explained can be realized in its fullness only through the common will. There are, of course, elements of value in the good government of a benevolent despot or of a fatherly aristocracy. Within any peaceful order there is room for many good things to flourish. But the full fruit of social progress is only to be reaped by a society in which the generality of men and women are not only passive recipients but practical contributors. To make the rights and responsibilities of citizens real and living, and to extend them as widely as the conditions of society allow, is thus an integral part of the organic conception of society, and the justification of the democratic principle. It is, at the same time, the justification of nationalism so far as nationalism is founded on a true interpretation of history. For, inasmuch as the true social harmony rests on feeling and makes use of all the natural ties of kinship, of neighbourliness, of congruity of character and belief, and of language and mode of life, the best, healthiest, and most vigorous political unit is that to which men are by their own feelings strongly drawn. Any breach of such unity, whether by forcible disruption or by compulsory inclusion in a larger society of alien sentiments and laws, tends to mutilate—or, at lowest, to cramp—the spontaneous development of social life. National and personal freedom are growths of the same root, and their historic connection rests on no accident, but on ultimate identity of idea.

Thus in the organic conception of society each of the leading ideas of historic Liberalism has its part to play. The ideal society is conceived as a whole which lives and flourishes by the harmonious growth of its parts, each of which in developing on its own lines and in accordance with its own nature tends on the whole to further the development of others. There is some elementary trace of such harmony in every form of social life that can maintain itself, for if the conflicting impulses predominated society would break up, and when they do predominate society does break up. At the other extreme, true harmony is an ideal which it is perhaps beyond the power of man to realize, but which serves to indicate the line of advance. But to admit this is to admit that the lines of possible development for each individual or, to use a more general phrase, for each constituent of the social order are not limited and fixed. There are many possibilities, and the course that will in the end make for social harmony is only one among them, while the possibilities of disharmony and conflict are many. The progress of society like that of the individual depends, then, ultimately on choice. It is not "natural," in the sense in which a physical law is natural, that is, in the sense of going forward automatically from stage to stage without backward turnings, de-

flections to the left, or fallings away on the right. It is natural only in this sense, that it is the expression of deep-seated forces of human nature which come to their own only by an infinitely slow and cumbersome process of mutual adjustment. Every constructive social doctrine rests on the conception of human progress. The heart of Liberalism is the understanding that progress is not a matter of mechanical contrivance, but of the liberation of living spiritual energy. Good mechanism is that which provides the channels wherein such energy can flow unimpeded, unobstructed by its own exuberance of output, vivifying the social structure, expanding and ennobling the life of mind.

#### CHAPTER VII: THE STATE AND THE INDIVIDUAL

We have seen something of the principle underlying the Liberal idea and of its various applications. We have now to put the test question. Are these different applications compatible? Will they work together to make that harmonious whole of which it is easy enough to talk in abstract terms? Are they themselves really harmonious in theory and in practice? Does scope for individual development, for example, consort with the idea of equality? Is popular sovereignty a practicable basis of personal freedom, or does it open an avenue to the tyranny of the mob? Will the sentiment of nationality dwell in unison with the ideal of peace? Is the love of liberty compatible with the full realization of the common will? If reconcilable in theory, may not these ideals collide in practice? Are there not clearly occasions demonstrable in history when development in one direction involves retrogression in another? If so, how are we to strike the balance of gain and loss? Does political progress offer us nothing but a choice of evils, or may we have some confidence that, in solving the most pressing problem of the moment, we shall in the end be in a better position for grappling with the obstacles that come next in turn?

I shall deal with the questions as far as limits of space allow, and I will take first the question of liberty and the common will upon which everything turns. Enough has already been said on this topic to enable us to shorten the discussion. We have seen that social liberty rests on restraint. A man can be free to direct his own life only in so far as others are prevented from molesting and interfering with him. So far there is no real departure from the strictest tenets of individualism. . . . [If we] examine the application of the doctrine of freedom of contract on the one hand, and the action of combinations on the other . . . [there will be] reason to think that in either case nominal freedom, that is to say, the absence of legal restraint,

might have the effect of impairing real freedom, that is to say, would allow the stronger party to coerce the weaker. . . . [The] effect of combination may be double-edged, [and] it may restrict freedom on one side and enlarge it on the other. In all these cases our contention . . . [is] simply that we should be guided by real and not by verbal considerations—that we should ask in every case what policy will yield effective freedom—and we . . . [find] a close connection in each instance between freedom and equality. In these cases, however, we [are] dealing with the relations of one man with another, or of one body of men with another, and we [can] regard the community as an arbiter between them whose business it [is] to see justice done and prevent the abuse of coercive power. Hence we [can] treat a very large part of the modern development of social control as motivated by the desire for a more effective liberty. The case is not so clear when we find the will of the individual in conflict with the will of the community as a whole. When such conflict occurs, it would seem that we must be prepared for one of two things. Either we must admit the legitimacy of coercion, avowedly not in the interests of freedom but in furtherance, without regard to freedom, of other ends which the community deems good. Or we must admit limitations which may cramp the development of the general will, and perchance prove a serious obstacle to collective progress. Is there any means of avoiding this conflict? Must we leave the question to be fought out in each case by a balance of advantages and disadvantages, or are there any general considerations which help us to determine the true sphere of collective and of private action?

Let us first observe that, as Mill pointed out long ago, there are many forms of collective action which do not involve coercion. The State may provide for certain objects which it deems good without compelling any one to make use of them. Thus it may maintain hospitals, though any one who can pay for them remains free to employ his own doctors and nurses. It may and does maintain a great educational system, while leaving every one free to maintain or to attend a private school. It maintains parks and picture galleries without driving any one into them. . . . It is true that for the support of these objects rates and taxes are compulsorily levied, but this form of compulsion raises a set of questions . . . [which] does not concern us here. For the moment we have to deal only with those actions of State which compel all citizens, or all whom they concern, to fall in with them and allow of no divergence. This kind of coercion tends to increase. Is its extension necessarily an encroachment upon liberty, or are the elements of value secured by collective control distinct from the elements of value secured by individual choice, so that within due limits each may develop side by side?

We have already declined to solve the problem by applying Mill's distinction between self-regarding and other-regarding actions, first because there are no actions which may not directly or indirectly affect others, secondly because even if there were they would not cease to be a matter of concern to others. The common good includes the good of every member of the community, and the injury which a man inflicts upon himself is matter of common concern, even apart from any ulterior effect upon others. If we refrain from coercing a man for his own good, it is not because his good is indifferent to us, but because it cannot be furthered by coercion. The difficulty is founded on the nature of the good itself, which on its personal side depends on the spontaneous flow of feeling checked and guided not by external restraint but by rational self-control. To try to form character by coercion is to destroy it in the making. Personality is not built up from without but grows from within, and the function of the outer order is not to create it, but to provide for it the most suitable conditions of growth. Thus, to the common question whether it is possible to make men good by Act of Parliament, the reply is that it is not possible to compel morality because morality is the act or character of a free agent, but that it is possible to create the conditions under which morality can develop, and among these not the least important is freedom from compulsion by others.

The argument suggests that compulsion is limited not by indifference—how could the character of its members be matter of indifference to the community?—but by its own incapacity to achieve its ends. The spirit cannot be enforced. Nor, conversely, can it prevail by force. It may require social expression. It may build up an association, a church for example, to carry out the common objects and maintain the common life of all who are like-minded. But the association must be free, because spiritually everything depends not on what is done but on the will with which it is done. The limit to the value of coercion thus lies not in the restriction of social purpose, but in the conditions of personal life. No force can compel growth. Whatever elements of social value depend on the accord of feeling, on comprehension of meaning, on the assent of will, must come through liberty. Here is the sphere and function of liberty in the social harmony.

Where, then, is the sphere of compulsion, and what is its value? The reply is that compulsion is of value where outward conformity is of value, and this may be in any case where the non-conformity of one wrecks the purpose of others. We have already remarked that liberty itself only rests upon restraint. Thus a religious body is not, properly speaking, free to march in procession through the streets unless people of a different religion are re-



strained from pelting the procession with stones and pursuing it with insolence. We restrain them from disorder not to teach them the genuine spirit of religion, which they will not learn in the police court, but to secure to the other party the right of worship unmolested. The enforced restraint has its value in the action that it sets free. But we may not only restrain one man from obstructing another—and the extent to which we do this is the measure of the freedom that we maintain—but we may also restrain him from obstructing the general will; and this we have to do whenever uniformity is necessary to the end which the general will has in view. The majority of employers in a trade we may suppose would be willing to adopt certain precautions for the health or safety of their workers, to lower hours or to raise the rate of wages. They are unable to do so, however, as long as a minority, perhaps as long as a single employer, stands out. He would beat them in competition if they were voluntarily to undertake expenses from which he is free. In this case, the will of a minority, possibly the will of one man, thwarts that of the remainder. It coerces them, indirectly, but quite as effectively as if he were their master. If they, by combination, can coerce him no principle of liberty is violated. It is coercion against coercion, differing possibly in form and method, but not in principle or in spirit. Further, if the community as a whole sympathizes with the one side rather than the other, it can reasonably bring the law into play. Its object is not the moral education of the reculant individuals. Its object is to secure certain conditions which it believes necessary for the welfare of its members, and which can only be secured by an enforced uniformity.

It appears, then, that the true distinction is not between self-regarding and other-regarding actions, but between coercive and non-coercive actions. The function of State coercion is to override individual coercion, and, of course, coercion exercised by any association of individuals within the State. It is by this means that it maintains liberty of expression, security of person and property, genuine freedom of contract, the rights of public meeting and association, and finally its own power to carry out common objects undefeated by the recalcitrance of individual members. Undoubtedly it endows both individuals and associations with powers as well as with rights. But over these powers it must exercise supervision in the interests of equal justice. Just as compulsion failed in the sphere of liberty, the sphere of spiritual growth, so liberty fails in the external order wherever, by the mere absence of supervisory restriction, men are able directly or indirectly to put constraint on one another. This is why there is no intrinsic and inevitable conflict between liberty and compulsion, but at bottom a mutual need. The

object of compulsion is to secure the most favourable external conditions of inward growth and happiness so far as these conditions depend on combined action and uniform observance. The sphere of liberty is the sphere of growth itself. There is no true opposition between liberty as such and control as such, for every liberty rests on a corresponding act of control. The true opposition is between the control that cramps the personal life and the spiritual order, and the control that is aimed at securing the external and material conditions of their free and unimpeded development.

I do not pretend that this delimitation solves all problems. The "inward" life will seek to express itself in outward acts. A religious ordinance may bid the devout refuse military service, or withhold the payment of a tax, or decline to submit a building to inspection. Here are external matters where conscience and the State come into direct conflict, and where is the court of appeal that is to decide between them? In any given case the right, as judged by the ultimate effect on human welfare, may, of course, be on the one side, or on the other, or between the two. But is there anything to guide the two parties as long as each believes itself to be in the right and sees no ground for waiving its opinion? To begin with, clearly the State does well to avoid such conflicts by substituting alternatives. Other duties than that of military service may be found for a follower of Tolstoy, and as long as he is willing to take his full share of burdens the difficulty is fairly met. Again, the mere convenience of the majority cannot be fairly weighed against the religious convictions of the few. It might be convenient that certain public work should be done on Saturday, but mere convenience would be an insufficient ground for compelling Jews to participate in it. Religious and ethical conviction must be weighed against religious and ethical conviction. It is not number that counts morally, but the belief that is reasoned out according to the best of one's lights as to the necessities of the common good. But the conscience of the community has its rights just as much as the conscience of the individual. If we are convinced that the inspection of a convent laundry is required in the interest, not of mere official routine, but of justice and humanity, we can do nothing but insist upon it, and when all has been done that can be done to save the individual conscience the common conviction of the common good must have its way. In the end the external order belongs to the community, and the right of protest to the individual.

On the other side, the individual owes more to the community than is always recognized. Under modern conditions he is too much inclined to take for granted what the State does for him and to use the personal security

and liberty of speech which it affords him as a vantage ground from which he can in safety denounce its works and repudiate its authority. He assumes the right to be in or out of the social system as he chooses. He relies on the general law which protects him, and emancipates himself from some particular law which he finds oppressive to his conscience. He forgets or does not take the trouble to reflect that, if every one were to act as he does, the social machine would come to a stop. He certainly fails to make it clear how a society would subsist in which every man should claim the right of unrestricted disobedience to a law which he happens to think wrong. In fact, it is possible for an overtender conscience to consort with an insufficient sense of social responsibility. The combination is unfortunate; and we may fairly say that, if the State owes the utmost consideration to the conscience, its owner owes a corresponding debt to the State. With such mutual consideration, and with the development of the civic sense, conflicts between law and conscience are capable of being brought within very narrow limits, though their complete reconciliation will always remain a problem until men are generally agreed as to the fundamental conditions of the social harmony.

It may be asked, on the other hand, whether in insisting on the free development of personality we have not understated the duty of society to its members. We all admit a collective responsibility for children. Are there not grown-up people who stand just as much in need of care? What of the idiot, the imbecile, the feeble-minded or the drunkard? What does rational self-determination mean for these classes? They may injure no one but themselves except by the contagion of bad example. But have we no duty towards them, having in view their own good alone and leaving every other consideration aside? Have we not the right to take the feeble-minded under our care and to keep the drunkard from drink, purely for their own good and apart from every ulterior consideration? And, if so, must we not extend the whole sphere of permissible coercion, and admit that a man may for his own sake and with no ulterior object, be compelled to do what we think right and avoid what we think wrong?

The reply is that the argument is weak just where it seeks to generalize. We are compelled to put the insane under restraint for social reasons apart from their own benefit. But their own benefit would be a fully sufficient reason if no other existed. To them, by their misfortune, liberty, as we understand the term, has no application, because they are incapable of rational choice and therefore of the kind of growth for the sake of which freedom is valuable. The same thing is true of the feeble-minded, and if they are not

yet treated on the same principle it is merely because the recognition of their type as a type is relatively modern. But the same thing is also in its degree true of the drunkard, so far as he is the victim of an impulse which he has allowed to grow beyond his own control; and the question whether he should be regarded as a fit object for tutelage or not is to be decided in each case by asking whether such capacity of self-control as he retains would be impaired or repaired by a period of tutelar restraint. There is nothing in all this to touch the essential of liberty which is the value of the power of self-governance where it exists. All that is proved is that where it does not exist it is right to save men from suffering, and if the case admits to put them under conditions in which the normal balance of impulse is most likely to be restored. It may be added that, in the case of the drunkard—and I think the argument applies to all cases where overwhelming impulse is apt to master the will—it is a still more obvious and elementary duty to remove the sources of temptation, and to treat as anti-social in the highest degree every attempt to make profit out of human weakness, misery, and wrongdoing. The case is not unlike that of a very unequal contract. The tempter is coolly seeking his profit, and the sufferer is beset with a fiend within. There is a form of coercion here which the genuine spirit of liberty will not fail to recognize as its enemy, and a form of injury to another which is not the less real because its weapon is an impulse which forces that other to the consent which he yields.

I conclude that there is nothing in the doctrine of liberty to hinder the movement of general will in the sphere in which it is really efficient, and nothing in a just conception of the objects and methods of the general will to curtail liberty in the performance of the functions, social and personal, in which its value lies. Liberty and compulsion have complementary functions, and the self-governing State is at once the product and the condition of the self-governing individual.

Thus there is no difficulty in understanding why the extension of State control on one side goes along with determined resistance to encroachments on another. It is a question not of increasing or diminishing, but of reorganizing restraints. The period which has witnessed a rapid extension of industrial legislation has seen as determined a resistance to anything like the establishment of doctrinal religious teaching by a State authority,<sup>2</sup> and the distinction is perfectly just. At bottom it is the same conception of liberty

<sup>2</sup> The objection most often taken to "undenominationalism" itself is that it is in reality a form of doctrinal teaching seeking State endowment.



and the same conception of the common will that prompts the regulation of industry and the severance of religious worship and doctrinal teaching from the mechanism of State control.

So far we have been considering what the State compels the individual to do. If we pass to the question what the State is to do for the individual, a different but parallel question arises, and we have to note a corresponding movement of opinion. If the State does for the individual what he ought to do for himself what will be the effect on character, initiative, enterprise? It is a question now not of freedom, but of responsibility, and it is one that has caused many searchings of heart, and in respect of which opinion has undergone a remarkable change. Thus, in relation to poverty the older view was that the first thing needful was self-help. It was the business of every man to provide for himself and his family. If, indeed, he utterly failed, neither he nor they could be left to starve, and there was the Poor Law machinery to deal with his case. But the aim of every sincere friend of the poor must be to keep them away from the Poor Law machine. Experience of the forty years before 1834 had taught us what came of free resort to public funds by way of subvention to inadequate wages. It meant simply that the standard of remuneration was lowered in proportion as men could rely on public aid to make good the deficiency, while at the same time the incentives to independent labour were weakened when the pauper stood on an equal footing with the hard-working man. In general, if the attempt was made to substitute for personal effort the help of others, the result would only sap individual initiative and in the end bring down the rate of industrial remuneration. It was thought, for example—and this very point was urged against proposals for Old Age Pensions—that if any of the objects for which a man will, if possible, provide were removed from the scope of his own activity, he would in consequence be content with proportionally lower wages; if the employer was to compensate him for accident, he would fail to make provision for accidents on his own account; if his children were fed by the ratepayers, he would not earn the money wherewith to feed them. Hence, on the one hand, it was urged that the rate of wages would tend to adapt itself to the necessities of the wage earner, that in proportion as his necessities were met from other sources his wages would fall, that accordingly the apparent relief would be in large measure illusory, while finally, in view of the diminished stimulus to individual exertion, the productivity of labour would fall off, the incentives to industry would be diminished and the community as a whole would be poorer. Upon the other hand, it was conceived that, however deplorable the condition of the working classes

might be, the right way of raising them was to trust to individual enterprise and possibly, according to some thinkers, to voluntary combination. By these means the efficiency of labour might be enhanced and its regular remuneration raised. By sternly withholding all external supports we should teach the working classes to stand alone, and if there were pain in the disciplinary process there was yet hope in the future. They would come by degrees to a position of economic independence in which they would be able to face the risks of life, not in reliance upon the State, but by the force of their own brains and the strength of their own right arms.

These views no longer command the same measure of assent. On all sides we find the State making active provision for the poorer classes and not by any means for the destitute alone. We find it educating the children, providing medical inspection, authorizing the feeding of the necessitous at the expense of the ratepayers, helping them to obtain employment through free Labour Exchanges, seeking to organize the labour market with a view to the mitigation of unemployment, and providing old age pensions for all whose incomes fall below thirteen shillings a week, without exacting any contribution. Now, in all this, we may well ask, is the State going forward blindly on the paths of broad and generous but unconsidered charity? Is it and can it remain indifferent to the effect on individual initiative and personal or parental responsibility? Or may we suppose that the wiser heads are well aware of what they are about, have looked at the matter on all sides, and are guided by a reasonable conception of the duty of the State and the responsibilities of the individual? Are we, in fact—for this is really the question—seeking charity or justice?

We said above that it was the function of the State to secure the conditions upon which mind and character may develop themselves. Similarly we may say now that the function of the State is to secure conditions upon which its citizens are able to win by their own efforts all that is necessary to a full civic efficiency. It is not for the State to feed, house, or clothe them. It is for the State to take care that the economic conditions are such that the normal man who is not defective in mind or body or will can by useful labour feed, house, and clothe himself and his family. The "right to work" and the right to a "living wage" are just as valid as the rights of person or property. That is to say, they are integral conditions of a good social order. A society in which a single honest man of normal capacity is definitely unable to find the means of maintaining himself by useful work is to that extent suffering from malorganization. There is somewhere a defect in the social system, a hitch in the economic machine. Now, the individual workman cannot put

the machine straight. He is the last person to have any say in the control of the market. It is not his fault if there is over-production in his industry, or if a new and cheaper process has been introduced which makes his particular skill, perhaps the product of years of application, a drug in the market. He does not direct or regulate industry. He is not responsible for its ups and downs, but he has to pay for them. That is why it is not charity but justice for which he is asking. Now, it may be infinitely difficult to meet his demand. To do so may involve a far-reaching economic reconstruction. The industrial questions involved may be so little understood that we may easily make matters worse in the attempt to make them better. All this shows the difficulty in finding means of meeting this particular claim of justice, but it does not shake its position as a claim of justice. A right is a right none the less though the means of securing it be imperfectly known; and the workman who is unemployed or underpaid through economic malorganization will remain a reproach not to the charity but to the justice of society as long as he is to be seen in the land.

If this view of the duty of the State and the right of the workman is coming to prevail, it is owing partly to an enhanced sense of common responsibility, and partly to the teaching of experience. In the earlier days of the Free Trade era, it was permissible to hope that self-help would be an adequate solvent, and that with cheap food and expanding commerce the average workman would be able by the exercise of prudence and thrift not only to maintain himself in good times, but to lay by for sickness, unemployment, and old age. The actual course of events has in large measure disappointed these hopes. It is true that the standard of living in England has progressively advanced throughout the nineteenth century. It is true, in particular, that, since the disastrous period that preceded the Repeal of the Corn Laws and the passing of the Ten Hours' Act, social improvement has been real and marked. Trade Unionism and co-operation have grown, wages upon the whole have increased, the cost of living has diminished, housing and sanitation have improved, the death rate has fallen from about twenty-two to less than fifteen per thousand. But with all this improvement the prospect of a complete and lifelong economic independence for the average workman upon the lines of individual competition, even when supplemented and guarded by the collective bargaining of the Trade Union, appears exceedingly remote. The increase of wages does not appear to be by any means proportionate to the general growth of wealth. The whole standard of living has risen; the very provision of education has brought with it new needs and has almost compelled a higher standard of life in order to satisfy them.

As a whole, the working classes of England, though less thrifty than those of some Continental countries, cannot be accused of undue negligence with regard to the future. The accumulation of savings in Friendly Societies, Trade Unions, Co-operative Societies, and Savings Banks shows an increase which has more than kept pace with the rise in the level of wages; yet there appears no likelihood that the average manual worker will attain the goal of that full independence, covering all the risks of life for self and family, which can alone render the competitive system really adequate to the demands of a civilized conscience. The careful researches of Mr. Booth in London and Mr. Rowntree in York, and of others in country districts, have revealed that a considerable percentage of the working classes are actually unable to earn a sum of money representing the full cost of the barest physical necessities for an average family; and, though the bulk of the working classes are undoubtedly in a better position than this, these researches go to show that even the relatively well-to-do gravitate towards this line of primary poverty in seasons of stress, at the time when the children are still at school, for example, or from the moment when the principal wage-earner begins to fail, in the decline of middle life. If only some ten per cent of the population are actually living upon the poverty line at any given time, twice or three times that number, it is reasonable to suppose, must approach the line in one period or other of their lives. But when we ascend from the conception of a bare physical maintenance for an average family to such a wage as would provide the real minimum requirements of a civilized life and meet all its contingencies without having to lean on any external prop, we should have to make additions to Mr. Rowntree's figure which have not yet been computed, but as to which it is probably well within the mark to say that none but the most highly skilled artisans are able to earn a remuneration meeting the requirements of the case. But, if that is so, it is clear that the system of industrial competition fails to meet the ethical demand embodied in the conception of the "living wage." That system holds out no hope of an improvement which shall bring the means of such a healthy and independent existence as should be the birthright of every citizen of a free state within the grasp of the mass of the people of the United Kingdom. It is this belief slowly penetrating the public mind which has turned it to new thoughts of social regeneration. The sum and substance of the changes that I have mentioned may be expressed in the principle that the individual cannot stand alone, but that between him and the State there is a reciprocal obligation. He owes the State the duty of industriously working for himself and his family. He is not to exploit the labour of his young



children, but to submit to the public requirements for their education, health, cleanliness and general well-being. On the other side society owes to him the means of maintaining a civilized standard of life, and this debt is not adequately discharged by leaving him to secure such wages as he can in the higgling of the market.

This view of social obligation lays increased stress on public but by no means ignores private responsibility. It is a simple principle of applied ethics that responsibility should be commensurate with power. Now, given the opportunity of adequately remunerated work, a man has the power to earn his living. It is his right and his duty to make the best use of his opportunity, and if he fails, he may fairly suffer the penalty of being treated as a pauper or even, in an extreme case, as a criminal. But the opportunity itself he cannot command with the same freedom. It is only within narrow limits that it comes within the sphere of his control. The opportunities of work and the remuneration for work are determined by a complex mass of social forces which no individual, certainly no individual workman, can shape. They can be controlled, if at all, by the organized action of the community, and therefore, by a just apportionment of responsibility, it is for the community to deal with them. . . .

## R. H. TAWNEY

**R**ICHARD HENRY TAWNEY, born in 1880, has been, for more than forty years, one of England's most distinguished economic historians; from 1931 until his retirement in 1949 he was professor of economic history at the University of London. A number of his works, such as *The Agrarian Problem in the Sixteenth Century* (1912), *The Acquisitive Society* (1920), *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (1926), and *Land and Labour in China* (1932), have become classics in the field. Whether he is dealing with the enclosure movement in sixteenth-century England or with the development of the forms of capitalist enterprise, Tawney seeks to trace the connections between changing economic patterns and political and social institutions, as well as the ideas and values of an age, whether expressed in the form of systematic theories or popularly accepted beliefs and ideals. Moreover, he has always tried to use both his knowledge of previous economic arrangements and his sense of their interconnections with other aspects of human life in order to illuminate contemporary problems and suggest methods for their solution. In a word, he is one of the few historians of our time who has employed historical research as a basis from which to develop and expound a social philosophy relevant to the issues of the present day.

Since 1905 Tawney has been one of the leading figures in the Workers' Educational Association in Great Britain, and for many years he has been an ardent supporter of the Labor Party and its program. Although both his intellectual activities and his attitudes toward practical politics have been influenced by the work of Marx, he has never been, in either sphere, a doctrinaire Marxist. Particularly during the 1930's, when some of the intellectuals in the Labor Party were attracted by the idea that socialism could be attained only by the abandonment of the methods of parliamentary democracy, Tawney insisted that the policy of the British socialist movement must be uncompromisingly based on complete allegiance to democracy. He was never seduced by the notion that a dictatorship, because it was socialist, thereby became a democracy; he never forgot that "under dictatorships, whatever the fancy names by which they may be called, the only people who dictate are the dictators and their friends." Yet, throughout his life he has battled strenuously against "the religion of inequality" which, in his view, has poisoned every aspect of the life of British society. For Tawney, the argument that prescriptive rights and vested interests are necessary or even desirable elements in social organization, is employed to maintain a situation in which a small minority not only receive a greatly disproportionate share of the total wealth and income but also enter life endowed with all the advantages of health, security, education, and other opportunities for self-realization. On the other hand, poor health, inferior housing, cheap and short-term education, and constant insecurity stunt the potentialities of most of those who happen to be born in the "lower orders" of society. Although Tawney insists that material inequalities must be sharply reduced so that this cleavage between "the two Englands" may be eliminated, he does not regard economic equality as the

highest end. Freedom, in the sense of the fullest possible development by each citizen of his own particular talents and abilities, is the greatest good, and a large measure of equality of external conditions and of opportunity is essential if that freedom is to be realized in the lives of all men.

*Equality*, first published in 1931, was revised in 1938. A new edition, with an epilogue tracing the progress made in England toward the elimination of inequality from 1938 to 1950, appeared in 1952. It is from this latest edition that the following selection has been taken.



## EQUALITY

### *Inequality and Social Structure*

[To] criticize inequality and to desire equality is not, as is sometimes suggested, to cherish the romantic illusion that men are equal in character and intelligence. It is to hold that, while their natural endowments differ profoundly, it is the mark of a civilized society to aim at eliminating such inequalities as have their source, not in individual differences, but in its own organisation, and that individual differences, which are a source of social energy, are more likely to ripen and find expression if social inequalities are, as far as practicable, diminished. And the obstacle to the progress of equality is something simpler and more potent than finds expression in the familiar truism that men vary in their mental and moral, as well as in their physical, characteristics, important and valuable though that truism is as a reminder that different individuals require different types of provision. It is the habit of mind which thinks it, not regrettable, but natural and desirable, that different sections of a community should be distinguished from each other by sharp differences of economic status, of environment, of education and culture and habit of life. It is the temper which regards with approval the social institutions and economic arrangements by which such differences are emphasized and enhanced, and feels distrust and apprehension at all attempts to diminish them.

The institutions and policies in which that temper has found expression are infinite in number. At one time it has coloured the relations between the sexes; at another, those between religions; at a third, those between members of different races. But in communities no longer divided by religion or race,

---

This selection has been reprinted from R. H. Tawney, *Equality* (pp. 49-55, 75-90, George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., London, 4th ed., 1952) by permission of the publisher.

and in which men and women are treated as political and economic equals, the divisions which remain are, nevertheless, not insignificant. The practical form which they most commonly assume—the most conspicuous external symptom of difference of economic status and social position—is, of course, a graduated system of social classes, and it is by softening or obliterating, not individual differences, but class gradations, that the historical movements directed towards diminishing inequality have attempted to attain their objective. It is, therefore, by considering the class system that light upon the problem of inequality is, in the first place at least, to be sought, and it is by their attitude to the relations between classes that the equalitarian temper and philosophy are distinguished from their opposite.

A society which values equality will attach a high degree of significance to differences of character and intelligence between different individuals, and a low degree of significance to economic and social differences between different groups. It will endeavour, in shaping its policy and organization, to encourage the former and to neutralize and suppress the latter, and will regard it as vulgar and childish to emphasize them when, unfortunately, they still exist. A society which is in love with inequality will take such differences seriously, and will allow them to overflow from the regions, such as economic life, where they have their origin, and from which it is difficult wholly to expel them, till they become a kind of morbid obsession, colouring the whole world of social relations.

#### THE MEANING OF CLASS

The idea of "class," most candid observers will admit, is among the most powerful of social categories. Its significance is sometimes denied on the ground that, as Professor Carr-Saunders and Mr. Caradog Jones remark in their valuable book, a group described as a class may "upon many an issue be divided against itself." But this is to confuse the fact of class with the consciousness of class, which is a different phenomenon. The fact creates the consciousness, not the consciousness the fact. The former may exist without the latter, and a group may be marked by common characteristics, and occupy a distinctive position *vis-à-vis* other groups, without, except at moments of exceptional tension, being aware that it does so.

While, however, class is a powerful category, it is also an ambiguous one, and it is not surprising that there should be wide differences in the interpretations placed upon it both by sociologists and by laymen. War, the institution of private property, biological characteristics, the division of labour, have all been adduced to explain the facts of class formation and class dif-



ferentiation. The diversity of doctrines is natural, since the facts themselves are diverse. Clearly, there are societies in which the position and relations of the groups composing them have been determined ultimately by the effect of conquest. Clearly, the rules under which property is held and transmitted have played a large part in fixing the conditions by which different groups are distinguished from each other. Clearly, there are circumstances in which the biological characteristics of different groups are a relevant consideration. Clearly, the emergence of new social groups is a natural accompaniment of the differentiation of economic functions—of the breaking up, for example, of a relatively simple and undifferentiated society into a multitude of specialized crafts and professions, each with its different economic *métier*, its different training and outlook and habit of life, which has been the most obvious consequence of the transition of large parts of Europe from the predominantly agricultural civilization of two centuries ago to the predominantly industrial civilization of to-day.

These different factors have, however, varying degrees of importance in different ages, different communities, and different connections. In western Europe, for example, the imposition of one race upon another by military force was of great importance during some earlier periods of its history, but in recent centuries has played but little part in modifying its social structure. Certain groups are marked, it seems, by different biological characteristics. Such characteristics require, however, the lapse of considerable periods to produce their result, while marked alterations in social structure may take place in the course of a single lifetime. It is difficult to suppose that the broad changes in social classification which have occurred in the immediate past—the profound modification of class relations, for example, which was the result of the French Revolution, or the rise of new types of class system and the obliteration of the old, which has everywhere accompanied the development of the great industry, or the more recent growth of a *nouvelle couche sociale*<sup>1</sup> of technicians, managers, scientific experts, professional administrators, and public servants—are most appropriately interpreted as a biological phenomenon.

Nor, important though economic forces have been, can the gradations of classes be explained, as is sometimes suggested, purely as a case of economic specialization. It may be true, indeed, that the most useful conception of a class is that which regards it as a social group with a strong tinge of community of economic interest. But, while classes are social groups, not all social groups, even when they have common economic interests, can be de-

<sup>1</sup> [*New social grade.*]

scribed as classes. "Classes," observed Lord Bryce, in writing of the United States of a generation ago, "are in America by no means the same thing as in the greater nations of Europe. One must not, for political purposes, divide them as upper and lower, richer and poorer, but rather according to the occupations they respectively follow." His distinction between occupational and social divisions still retains its significance. Stockbrokers, barristers and doctors, miners, railwaymen and cotton-spinners represent half a dozen professions; but they are not normally regarded as constituting half a dozen classes. Postmen, bricklayers and engineers pursue sharply contrasted occupations, and often have divergent economic interests; but they are not distinguished from each other by the differences of economic status, environment, education, and opportunity, which are associated in common opinion with differences between classes. A community which is marked by a low degree of economic differentiation may yet possess a class system of which the lines are sharply drawn and rigidly defined, as was the case, for example, in many parts of the agricultural Europe of the eighteenth century. It may be marked by a high degree of economic differentiation, and yet appear, when judged by English standards, to be comparatively classless, as is the case, for example, with some British Dominions.

The conception of class is, therefore, at once more fundamental and more elusive than that of the division between different types of occupation. It is elusive because it is comprehensive. It relates, not to this or that specific characteristic of a group, but to a totality of conditions by which several sides of life are affected. The classification will vary, no doubt, with the purpose for which it is made, and with the points which accordingly are selected for emphasis. Conventional usage, which is concerned, not with the details of the social structure, but with its broad outlines and salient features, makes a rough division of individuals according to their resources and manner of life, the amount of their income and the source from which it is derived, their ownership of property or their connection with those who own it, the security or insecurity of their economic position, the degree to which they belong by tradition, education and association to social strata which are accustomed, even on a humble scale, to exercise direction, or, on the other hand, to those whose normal lot is to be directed by others. It draws its class lines, in short, with reference partly to consumption, partly to production; partly by standards of expenditure, partly by the position which different individuals occupy in the economic system. Though its criteria change from generation to generation, and are obviously changing to-day with surprising rapidity, its general tendency is clear. It sets at one end of

the scale those who can spend much, or who have what is called an independent income, because they are dependent for it on persons other than themselves, and at the other end those who can spend little and live by manual labour. It places at a point between the two those who can spend more than the second but less than the first, and who own a little property or stand near to those who own it.

Thus conventional usage has ignored, in its rough way, the details, and has emphasized the hinges, the nodal points, the main watersheds. And in so doing, it has come nearer, with all its crudity, to grasping certain significant sides of the reality than have those who would see in the idea of class merely the social expression of the division of labour between groups engaged in different types of economic activity. For, though differences of class and differences of occupation may often have sprung from a common source, they acquire, once established, a vitality and momentum of their own, and often flow in distinct, or even divergent, channels. The essence of the latter is difference of economic function: they are an organ of co-operation through the division of labour. The essence of the former is difference of status and power: they have normally been, in some measure at least, the expression of varying degrees of authority and subordination. Class systems, in fact, in the historical forms which they most commonly have assumed, have usually been associated—hence, indeed, the invidious suggestion which the word sometimes conveys—with differences, not merely of economic *métier*, but of social position, so that different groups have been distinguished from each other, not only, like different professions, by the nature of the service they render, but in status, in influence, and sometimes in consideration and respect. Even to-day, indeed, though somewhat less regularly than in the past, class tends to determine occupation rather than occupation class.

Public opinion has in all ages been struck by this feature in social organization, and has used terms of varying degrees of appropriateness to distinguish the upper strata from the lower, describing them sometimes as the beautiful and good, sometimes as the fat men, sometimes as the twiceborn, or the sons of gods and heroes, sometimes merely, in nations attached to virtue rather than beauty, as the best people. Such expressions are not terms of precision, but they indicate a phenomenon which has attracted attention, and which has certainly deserved it. The note of most societies has been, in short, not merely vertical differentiation, as between partners with varying tasks in a common enterprise, but also what, for want of a better term, may be called horizontal stratification, as between those who occupy a position of special advantage and those who do not.

The degree to which such horizontal divisions obtain varies widely in the same community at different times, and in different communities at the same time. They are more marked in most parts of Europe than in America and the British Dominions, in the east of America than in the west, in England than in France; and they were obviously more marked in the England of half a century ago than they are in that of to-day. Being in constant motion, they are not easily photographed, and they are hardly described before the description is out of date. But such divisions exist to some extent, it will be agreed, in most societies, and, wherever they exist to a considerable extent, they are liable, it will also be agreed, to be a focus of irritation. Accepted in the past with placid indifference, they resemble, under modern political and economic conditions, a sensitive nerve which vibrates when touched, a tooth which, once it has started aching, must be soothed or extracted before it can be forgotten, and attention paid to the serious business of life. It is possible that they possess certain advantages; it is certain that they possess also certain grave disadvantages. The advantages—if such there are—are most likely to be enjoyed, and the disadvantages removed, if their main features, at any rate, are, in the first place, neither denounced, nor applauded, but understood. . . .

#### EQUALITY AND CULTURE

Since life is a swallow, and theory a snail, it is not surprising that varieties of class organization should be but inadequately represented in the terminology of political science. But the absence of a word to describe the type of society which combines the forms of political democracy with sharp economic and social divisions is, none the less, unfortunate, since it obscures the practical realities which it is essential to grasp. The conventional classification of communities by the character of their constitutional arrangements had its utility in an age when the principal objective of effort and speculation was the extension of political rights. It is economic and social forces, however, which are most influential in determining the practical operation of political institutions, and it is economic and social relations that create the most urgent of the internal problems confronting industrial communities. The most significant differences distinguishing different societies from each other are, in short, not different forms of constitution and government, but different types of economic and social structure.

Of such distinctions the most fundamental is that which divides communities where economic initiative is widely diffused, and class differences small in dimensions and trivial in their effects, from those where the condi-



tions obtaining are the opposite—where the mass of mankind exercise little influence on the direction of economic enterprise, and where economic and cultural gradations descend precipitately from one stratum of the population to another. Both types may possess representative institutions, a wide franchise, and responsible government; and both, therefore, may properly be described as democracies. But to regard them as, on that account, resembling each other—to ignore the profound differences of spirit and quality between a democracy in which class divisions play a comparatively unimportant part in the life of society, and a democracy where the influence of such differences is all-pervasive—is to do violence to realities. It is like supposing that all mammals have the same anatomical structure, or that the scenery of England resembles that of Switzerland because both countries lie in the temperate zone. Such varieties should be treated by political scientists as separate species, and should be given distinctive names. The former contain large elements, not merely of political, but of social, democracy. The latter are political democracies, but social oligarchies.

Social oligarchies have existed under widely divergent material circumstances, and in the most sharply contrasted conditions of economic civilization. In the past they were specially associated with the feudal organization of agricultural societies, so that, in the infancy of the modern economic world, the expansion of commerce and manufacture was hailed, by some with delight, by others with apprehension, as the acid which would dissolve them. To-day, since in most parts of Europe the peasant farmer has come to his own, it is highly industrialized communities that are their favourite stronghold. Though it is in countries such as England and Germany, where the great industry flowed into the moulds prepared by an aristocratic tradition, that they attain their full efflorescence, they do not only conform to an old tradition of aristocracy, they also themselves create a new tradition. They appear to be the form of social organization which, in the absence of counteracting measures, the great industry itself tends spontaneously to produce, when its first outburst of juvenile energy is over, when its individualistic, levelling and destructive phase has given place to that of system and organization.

The most instructive illustration of that tendency is given by the history of industrial America, because it is in America that its operation has been at once swiftest and least anticipated. The United States started on its dazzling career as nearly in a state of innocence as a society can. It had no medieval past to bury. It was free from the complicated iniquities of feudal land-law and the European class system. It began, at least in the north, as a society of

small farmers, merchants, and master-craftsmen, without either a large wage-earning proletariat or the remnants of serfdom which lingered in Europe till a century ago. It believed that all men have an equal right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The confident hope that it would be unsullied by the disparities of power and wealth which corrupted Europe was the inspiration of those who, like Jefferson, saw in the Revolution, not merely the birth of a new state, but the dawn of a happier society.

It is the general, if partial, realization of that hope, in certain parts, at least, of America, which has made it for a century the magnet of Europe, and which still gives to American life much of its charm. It is marked, indeed, by much economic inequality; but it is also marked by much social equality, which is the legacy from an earlier phase of its economic civilization—though how long it will survive in the conditions of to-day is a different question, on which Americans themselves sometimes speak with apprehension. But evidently it is not in the America of which Englishmen hear most, but in that of which they hear least, not in the America of Wall Street and Pittsburgh and the United States Steel Corporation and Mr. Morgan and Mr. Ford, but in the America of the farmer and the country town and the Middle West, that this charm is to-day most likely to be found. And evidently the equality of manners and freedom from certain conventional restraints, to which, partly at least, it is due, exist, not because of the industrial expansion of America, but in spite of it.

Nearly a century ago, De Tocqueville, who wrote on the first page of his *De la Démocratie en Amérique*<sup>2</sup> that the general equality of conditions in America was the fundamental fact from which all others seemed to be derived, gave to one of his later chapters the significant title, "How aristocracy may be engendered by manufactures." "If ever," he wrote, "a permanent inequality of conditions and aristocracy again penetrate into the world, it may be predicted that this is the gate by which they will enter." Americans have led the world in the frequency and fullness of their official inquiries into economic organization, and, if the results of such inquiries may be trusted, that prophecy, as far as industrial America is concerned, is to-day not far from fulfilment. And what is true of the great industry in the United States is not less true of other industrial communities. Their natural tendency, it seems, except in so far as it is qualified and held in check by other forces, is to produce the concentration of economic power, and the inequalities of circumstance and condition, which De Tocqueville noted as the mark of an aristocratic social order.

<sup>2</sup> [On Democracy in America.]

A right to the pursuit of happiness is not identical with the right to attain it, and to state the fact is not to pronounce a judgment upon it. To see in economic concentration and social stratification the mystery of iniquity and the mark of the beast, to regard as the result of a deliberate and sinister conspiracy qualities which are the result partly of a failure to control impersonal forces, partly, not of a subtle and unscrupulous intelligence, but of its opposite—of a crude appetite for money and power among the few, and a reverence for success in obtaining them among the many—would, no doubt, be naïve. Yes, but how irrational also to suppose, as in England it is much commoner to suppose, that such characteristics are anything but a misfortune which an intelligent community will do all in its power to remove! How absurd to regard them as inevitable and admirable, to invest them with a halo of respectful admiration, and to deplore, whenever their economic foundations are threatened, the crumbling of civilization and the Goth at the gate! A nation is not civilized because a handful of its members are successful in acquiring large sums of money and in persuading their fellows that a catastrophe will occur if they do not acquire it, any more than Dahomey was civilized because its king had a golden stool and an army of slaves, or Judea because Solomon possessed a thousand wives and imported apes and peacocks, and surrounded the worship of Moloch and Ashtaroth with an impressive ritual.

What matters to a society is less what it owns than what it is and how it uses its possessions. It is civilized in so far as its conduct is guided by a just appreciation of spiritual ends, in so far as it uses its material resources to promote the dignity and refinement of the individual human beings who compose it. Violent contrasts of wealth and power, and an indiscriminating devotion to institutions by which such contrasts are maintained and heightened, do not promote the attainment of such ends, but thwart it. They are, therefore, a mark, not of civilization, but of barbarism, like the gold rings in the noses of savage monarchs, or the diamonds on their wives and the chains on their slaves. Since it is obviously such contrasts which determine the grounds upon which social struggles take place, and marshal the combatants who engage in them, they are a malady to be cured and a problem which demands solution.

But are they a malady? Granted, it is sometimes retorted, that sharp economic distinctions, with the complacency and callousness which such distinctions produce, are in themselves nauseous, are they not, nevertheless, the safeguard for virtues that would perish without them? Is not even the attachment of Englishmen to the idea of class, vulgar and repulsive as are many

of its manifestations, the lantern which shelters a spark that, but for its protection, would be extinguished or dimmed?

The characteristics of a civilized society, Mr. Bell has argued . . . are reasonableness and a sense of values, and these qualities were made possible in the ages in which, by general consent, they found their supreme and imperishable expression, because they had as their vehicle an élite—an élite which was released for the life of the spirit by the patient labour of slaves and peasants. What was true of the Athens of Pericles, and the Italy of the Renaissance, and the France of Voltaire, is true, in a humbler measure, of every society which is sufficiently mature to understand that freedom and intellectual energy are more vital to its welfare than the mechanical satisfaction of its material requirements. If it is to possess, not merely the comforts, but the graces, of existence, it must be enamoured of excellence. It must erect a standard of perfection, and preserve it inviolate against the clamour for the commonplace which is the appetite of the natural man, and of his eager hierophant, the practical reformer. But a standard of perfection, it is urged, is the achievement of a minority, and inequality is the hedge which protects it. It is the sacred grove which guards the shrine against the hooves of the multitude. Like an oasis which few can inhabit, but the very thought of which brings refreshment and hope to the sand-weary traveller, inequality, it is argued, protects the graces of life from being submerged beneath the dust of its daily necessities. It perpetuates a tradition of culture, by ensuring the survival of a class which is its visible embodiment, and which maintains that tradition in maintaining itself.

Compared with the formidable host which understands by civilization the elaboration of the apparatus and machinery of existence, as though Athens, or Florence, or Elizabethan England were objects of respectful pity when set side by side with modern London or New York, those who press such considerations are clearly on the side of light. If the Kingdom of Heaven is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace, neither is civilization the multiplication of motor-cars and cinemas, or of any other of the innumerable devices by which men accumulate means of ever-increasing intricacy to the attainment of ends which are not worth attaining. It is true that the mark of civilization is respect for excellence in the things of the spirit, and a readiness to incur sacrifice for the sake of fostering it. It is true that excellence is impossible in the absence of severe and exacting standards of attainment and appreciation which check the taste for cheap success and shoddy achievement by cultivating a temper which discriminates ruthlessly between the admirable and the second-rate. It is true that such a temper



has no more persistent or insidious foe than the perversion of values, which confuses the ends of life with the means, and elevates material prosperity, whether the interpretation put upon it is the accumulation of wealth or the diffusion of comfort, from the position of secondary and instrumental importance that properly belongs to it, into the grand and overmastering object of individual effort and public approval.

In order, however, to escape from one illusion, it ought not to be necessary to embrace another. If civilization is not the product of the kitchen garden, neither is it an exotic to be grown in a hot-house. Its flowers may be delicate, but its trunk must be robust, and the height to which it grows depends on the hold of its roots on the surrounding soil. Culture may be fastidious, but fastidiousness is not culture; and, though vulgarity is an enemy to "reasonableness and a sense of values," it is less deadly an enemy than gentility and complacency. A cloistered and secluded refinement, intolerant of the heat and dust of creative effort, is the note, not of civilization, but of the epochs which have despaired of it—which have seen, in one form or another, the triumph of the barbarian, and have sought compensation for defeat in writing cultured footnotes to the masterpieces they are incapable of producing. Its achievements may be admirable, but they are those of a silver age, not of a golden. The spiritual home of its votaries is not the Athens of Sophocles; it is the Alexandria of the scholiasts and the Rome of Claudian.

Clever men, it has been remarked, are impressed by their difference from their fellows; wise men are conscious of their resemblance to them. It would be ungracious to suggest that such an attitude is a mark rather of cleverness than of wisdom, but it is not wholly free from the spirit of the sect. When those who adopt it fall below themselves, when they relapse into glorifying what Bacon calls the *idola specus*,<sup>3</sup> they are liable to rhapsodize over civilization in the tone of a Muggletonian dispensing damnation to all but Muggletonians, as though its secret consisted in the fact that only a select minority is capable of enjoying it, as though it were a species of private entertainment to which a coterie of the right people had received an exclusive invitation.

What their error is they could learn from the great ages which they rightly admire. Neither of them, indeed, was quite the epicure's banquet which they are sometimes thought to have been. Athens, in its greatest days, like Florence in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, was a bustling commercial city, with an almost arrogant patriotism and a zest for politics which often found expression in crude and violent action. It was a city whose special boast was that it touched with its magic, not only, like its great rival, an

<sup>3</sup> [*Idols of the cave.*]

élite, but common men. Its policy of progressive taxation and liberal expenditure upon communal services roused the fury of the rich. Its poets and philosophers took public affairs with tragic seriousness. Its children of light had an incurable habit of discussing questions of art in terms of morality, quite like that *bête noire* of the select, the unregenerate Ruskin.

In no age was the contact between men of letters and men of affairs closer than in the France of the eighteenth century; in no age was the stimulus to speculation more practical, or the influence of speculation upon policy more intimate and direct. The note of a substantial part, not only of its avowedly polemical writing, but of its literature and philosophy, was a belief in the possibility of an almost infinite improvement in the lot of mankind by the advancement of knowledge and the exercise of thought. It was the conviction that Reason is never so much herself as when she turns the weapons sharpened in solitude against the institutions which perpetuate darkness and the offenders whose eminence is maintained at the cost of the degradation of the mass of mankind.

For there is one characteristic . . . which is common to the thought both of Athens and of eighteenth-century France, and which is not the least among the sources of the spell which they have laid on posterity. It is the quality which finds its noblest expression in the famous speech that Thucydides puts into the mouth of Pericles, and of which Voltaire, who lays aside his work as a man of letters to denounce the remnants of serfdom on the Church estates, and to expose the judicial murders of Calas and La Barre, is the grand example. It is—to use a word that at the moment is sadly misused—their humanism, their superb sense of the dignity of man. They speak a language of permanent persuasiveness, because it is not that of a party or a clique, but as universal as reason.

Humanism has many meanings, for human nature has many sides, and the attempt to appropriate it as the label of a sect is not felicitous. There is the humanism of the age which the word is most commonly used to describe, the humanism of the Renaissance, with its rediscovery of human achievement in art and letters. And there is the humanism of the eighteenth century, with its confidence in the new era to be opened to mankind by the triumphs of science, and its hatred of the leaden obscurantism which impeded its progress. There is the humanism which contrasts man with God, or, at least, with the God of some theologies; and there is the humanism which contrasts man with the brutes, and affirms that he is a little lower than the angels. These different senses of the word have often been at war; history is scarred, indeed, with the contentions between them. It

ought not to be difficult, nevertheless, for the apostles of the one to understand the other; for indignant though some of them would be at the suggestion, they are using different dialects of a common language. If "What a piece of work is man! how noble is reason! how infinite in faculty!" is the voice of humanism, so also is "The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath," and "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you." Shelley's lines,

The loathsome mask has fall'n, the man remains  
Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but man,  
Equal, unclass'd, tribeless, and nationless,  
Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king  
Over himself! just, gentle, wise, but man.

are one expression of the humanist spirit. Dante's "Consider your origin; ye were not formed to live like brutes, but to follow virtue and knowledge" is another.

Thus humanism is not the exclusive possession either of those who reject some particular body of religious doctrine or of those who accept it. It is, or it can be, the possession of both. It is not, as the fashion of the moment is disposed to suggest, the special mark of a generation which has lost its sense of the supernatural and is groping for a substitute. For, in order to be at home in this world, it is not sufficient, unfortunately, to disbelieve in another; and, in its intellectual interests, and order of life, and economic relations, such a generation is liable, in the mere innocent exuberance of its self-satisfaction, to display some traits, at least, which are not conspicuously humane. Humanism is the antithesis, not of theism or of Christianity—for how can the humanist spirit be one of indifference to issues that have been, for two thousand years, the principal concern and inspiration of a considerable part of humanity, or to a creed whose central doctrine is that God became man?—but of materialism. Its essence is simple. It is the attitude which judges the externals of life by their effect in assisting or hindering the life of the spirit. It is the belief that the machinery of existence—property and material wealth and industrial organization, and the whole fabric and mechanism of social institutions—is to be regarded as means to an end, and that this end is the growth towards perfection of individual human beings.

The humanist spirit, like the religious spirit, is not, indeed, indifferent to these things, which, on their own plane, are obviously important; but it resists their encroachment upon spheres which do not belong to them. It insists that they are not the objects of life, but its instruments, which are to be maintained when they are serviceable, and changed when they are not. Its aim is to liberate and cultivate the powers which make for energy and refine-

ment; and it is critical, therefore, of all forms of organization which sacrifice spontaneity to mechanism, or which seek, whether in the name of economic efficiency or of social equality, to reduce the variety of individual character and genius to a drab and monotonous uniformity. But it desires to cultivate these powers in all men, not only in a few. Resting, as it does, on the faith that the differences between men are less important and fundamental than their common humanity, it is the enemy of arbitrary and capricious divisions between different members of the human family, which are based, not upon what men, given suitable conditions, are capable of becoming, but on external distinctions between them, such as those created by birth or wealth.

Sharp contrasts of opportunity and circumstance, which deprive some classes of the means of development deemed essential for others, are sometimes defended on the ground that the result of abolishing them must be to produce, in the conventional phrase, a dead-level of mediocrity. Mediocrity, whether found in the valleys of society or, as not infrequently happens, among the peaks and eminences, is always to be deprecated, though it is hardly curable, perhaps, as sometimes seems to be supposed, by so simple a process as the application to conspicuous portions of the social system of sporadic dabs of varnish and gilt. But not all the ghosts which clothe themselves in metaphors are equally substantial, and whether a level is regrettable or not depends, after all, upon what is levelled.

Those who dread a dead-level of income or wealth . . . do not dread, it seems, a dead-level of law and order, and of security for life and property. They do not complain that persons endowed by nature with unusual qualities of strength, audacity or cunning are artificially prevented from breaking into houses, or terrorizing their neighbours, or forging cheques. On the contrary, they maintain a system of police in order to ensure that powers of this kind are, as far as may be, reduced to impotence. They insist on establishing a dead-level in these matters, because they know that, by preventing the strong from using their strength to oppress the weak, and the unscrupulous from profiting by their cleverness to cheat the simple, they are not crippling the development of personality, but assisting it. They do not ignore the importance of maintaining a high standard of effort and achievement. On the contrary, they deprive certain kinds of achievement of their fruits, in order to encourage the pursuit of others more compatible with the improvement of individual character, and more conducive to the good of society.

Violence and cunning are not the only forces, however, which hamper the individual in the exercise of his powers, or which cause false standards of



achievement to be substituted for true. There are also, in most societies, the special advantages conferred by wealth and property, and by the social institutions which favour them. At one time there has been the aristocratic spirit, which in England is now dead, with its emphasis on subordination and the respect which is due from the lower orders to the higher, irrespective of whether the higher deserve or not to be respected. At another time there has been the plutocratic or commercial spirit, which is very much alive, with its insistence on the right of every individual to acquire wealth, and to hold what he acquires, and by means of it to obtain consideration for himself and power over his fellows, without regard to the services—if any—by which he acquires it or the use which he makes of it.

Both have some virtues, which may have been in certain periods more important than their vices. But the tendency of both, when unchecked by other influences, is the same. It is to pervert the sense of values. It is to cause men, in the language of the Old Testament, "to go a-whoring after strange gods," which means, in the circumstances of to-day, staring upwards, eyes goggling and mouths agape, at the antics of a third-rate Elysium, and tormenting their unhappy souls, or what, in such conditions, is left of them, with the hope of wriggling into it. It is to hold up to public admiration sham criteria of eminence, the result of accepting which is, in the one case, snobbery, or a mean respect for shoddy and unreal distinction, and, in the other case, materialism, or a belief that the only real forms of distinction are money and the advantages which money can buy.

Progress depends, indeed, on a willingness on the part of the mass of mankind—and we all, in nine-tenths of our nature, belong to the mass—to recognize genuine superiority, and to submit themselves to its influence. But the condition of recognizing genuine superiority is a contempt for unfounded pretensions to it. Where the treasure is, there will the heart be also, and, if men are to respect each other for what they are, they must cease to respect each other for what they own. They must abolish, in short, the reverence for riches, which is the *lues Anglicana*, the hereditary disease of the English nation. And, human nature being what it is, in order to abolish the reverence for riches, they must make impossible the existence of a class which is important merely because it is rich.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the ages which were permeated most deeply with the sense of the dignity of man as a rational being were also ages which appear to have felt a somewhat slender respect for capricious distinctions of birth and fortune. It is not surprising that the temper which had as one of its manifestations humanism, or the perfecting of the individual,

should have had as another manifestation an outlook on society which sympathized with the attempt to bring the means of a good life within the reach of all, and regarded the subordination of class to class, and the arrogance and servility which such subordination naturally produces, as barbarian or gothic, as the mark of peoples which were incompletely civilized. It is in that spirit that Herodotus, speaking of the Athenians, who were regarded, in comparison with the Spartans, as dreadfully ungentlemanly, remarks that "it is evident, not in one thing alone, but on all sides of life, how excellent a thing is equality among men." It is in that spirit that the French writers of the eighteenth century, whose pernicious influence was denounced by Burke in the famous essay which George III said every gentleman should read, declared that equality, as well as liberty, must be the aim of the reformer.

It is true, of course, that institutions, as always, fell short of the ideal. It is true that the economic basis of Athenian society was slavery, and that one result of the victory of the liberal idea in France was the soulless commercialism which came to its own in 1830. But, compared with the practice of the world around them, compared with Persia, or even with most parts of Greece in the fifth century, or with England and Germany in the eighteenth, the influence of Athens and France was felt to make for humanism in life and manners, as well as in literature and art, and against the harshness and brutality of traditional systems of social petrification. They not only generated light, but diffused it. Within the limits set by their history and environment, it was their glory to stand for the general development of qualities which were prized, not as the monopoly of any class or profession of men, but as the attribute of man himself.

Thus the testimony of history is not so wholly on one side as is often suggested. Whether it is practicable or not to attain a large measure of equality may fairly be disputed; but it is not necessary, it seems, to be afraid of seeking it, on the ground that it is the enemy of culture and enlightenment. It is not necessary to shrink from lowering barriers of circumstance and opportunity, for fear that the quality of civilization will suffer as the radius of its influence is extended. It is true that civilization requires that there shall be free scope for activities which, judged by the conventional standards of the practical world, are useless or even pernicious, and which are significant precisely because they are not inspired by utilitarian motives, but spring, like the labour of the artist or student, from the disinterested passion for beauty or truth, or merely from the possession of powers the exercise of which is its own reward. Experience does not suggest, however,

that in modern England the plutocracy, with its devotion to the maxim *Privatim opulentia, publice egestas*,<sup>4</sup> is, in any special sense, the guardian of such activities, or that, to speak with moderation, it is noticeably more eager than the mass of the population to spend liberally on art, or education, or the things of the spirit.

Nor, if the maintenance, by the institutions of property and inheritance, of a class of whose leisure these activities are the occasional by-product is one method of sheltering them, is it necessarily either the only method, or that which is most likely to encourage in society a temper that is keenly alive to their importance and disposed to make sacrifices for the sake of providing opportunities for their further development. Culture is not an assortment of aesthetic sugar-plums for fastidious palates, but an energy of the soul. It can win no victories if it risks no defeats. When it feeds on itself, instead of drawing nourishment from the common life of mankind, it ceases to grow, and, when it ceases to grow, it ceases to live. In order that it may be, not merely an interesting museum specimen, but an active principle of intelligence and refinement, by which vulgarities are checked and crudities corrected, it is necessary, not only to preserve intact existing standards of excellence, and to diffuse their influence, but to broaden and enrich them by contact with an ever-widening range of emotional experiences and intellectual interests. The association of culture with a limited class, which is enabled by its wealth to carry the art of living to a high level of perfection, may achieve the first, but it cannot, by itself, achieve the second. It may refine, or appear to refine, some sections of a community, but it coarsens others, and smites, in the end, with a blight of sterility even refinement itself. It may preserve culture, but it cannot extend it; and, in the long run, it is only by its extension that, in the conditions of to-day, it is likely to be preserved.

Thus a class system which is marked by sharp horizontal divisions between different social strata is neither, as is sometimes suggested, an indispensable condition of civilization nor an edifying feature of it. It may, as some hold, be inevitable, like other misfortunes to which mankind is heir, but it is not lovable or admirable. It is the raw material out of which civilization has to be made, by bringing blind economic forces under rational control and sifting the gold of past history from its sand and sediment. The task of the spirit, whatever the name most appropriate to describe it, which seeks to permeate, not merely this fragment of society or that, but the whole community, with reason and mutual understanding, is not to flatter the

<sup>4</sup> [*Private wealth, public need.*]

natural impulses which have their origin in the fact of class, but to purify and educate them. It is to foster the growth of a classless society by speaking frankly of the perversions to which the class system gives rise and of the dangers which accompany them.

The forms which such perversions assume are, of course, innumerable, but the most fundamental of them are two. They are privilege and tyranny. The first is the insistence by certain groups on the enjoyment of special advantages which are convenient to themselves, but injurious to their neighbours. The second is the exercise of power, not for the common benefit, but in order that these special advantages may be strengthened and consolidated.

It is the nature of privilege and tyranny to be unconscious of themselves, and to protest, when challenged, that their horns and hooves are not dangerous, as in the past, but useful and handsome decorations, which no self-respecting society would dream of dispensing with. But they are the enemies, nevertheless, both of individual culture and of social amenity. They create a spirit of domination and servility, which produces callousness in those who profit by them, and resentment in those who do not, and suspicion and contention in both. A civilized community will endeavour to exorcize that spirit by removing its causes. It will insist that one condition, at least, of its deserving the name is that its members shall treat each other, not as means, but as ends, and that institutions which stunt the faculties of some among them for the advantage of others shall be generally recognized to be barbarous and odious. It will aim at making power, not arbitrary, but responsible, and, when it finds an element of privilege in social institutions, it will seek to purge it.



## GUNNAR MYRDAL

**B**ETWEEN 1938 and 1942, Karl Gunnar Myrdal, a Swedish economist, directed a research team in an intensive study of the "Negro problem" in the United States, a project instituted and financed by the Carnegie Corporation of New York. In 1944 the results of this investigation were published, as a two-volume report, under the title *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*, written by Myrdal with the assistance of Richard Sterner and Arnold Rose.

Myrdal was selected to head the research project not only because he was a renowned social scientist, but precisely because he was a foreigner. It was felt he could view with detachment the emotion-laden subject of the position of the Negro in American life. Before he had progressed far with his task, he observed the underlying paradoxes of American political and social life. On the one hand, he became acutely aware of American democratic ideals, which he perceived were interwoven with the fabric of American social behavior. He could not regard those ideals cynically, for he saw clearly that America was heir to all elements of the liberal tradition and that the values of that tradition were held in highest esteem by the American people. On the other hand, he could not ignore the patent differences between the ideals and the actuality of America's social and political experience. There was a great discrepancy between the image which the American held of himself and the reality of his social and political conduct, a discrepancy all the more apparent when the position of the Negro was directly under consideration. In order fairly to describe that discrepancy and to understand the tensions within the American conscience which, Myrdal felt, were its result, he sought first to explore the content of the American political and social "creed." It is from Myrdal's analysis of the American Creed, as it appears at the beginning of *An American Dilemma*, that the following selection has been taken.

Born in Gustafs, Sweden, in 1898, Gunnar Myrdal was educated at the Law School of the University of Stockholm and at various centers of learning in England, France, and Germany. He has held numerous academic posts in Sweden and abroad, and has also served as Senator in the Swedish parliament and Deputy Director of the Swedish Bank. He is presently the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. Among his notable works (besides *An American Dilemma*) are *The Theory of Risks and Prices* (1927), *Population Crisis* (1934), and *Monetary Equilibrium* (1939).



*AN AMERICAN DILEMMA* [I]*American Ideals and the American Conscience*

## I. UNITY OF IDEALS AND DIVERSITY OF CULTURE

It is a commonplace to point out the heterogeneity of the American nation and the swift succession of all sorts of changes in all its component parts and, as it often seems, in every conceivable direction. America is truly a shock to the stranger. The bewildering impression it gives of dissimilarity throughout and of chaotic unrest is indicated by the fact that few outside observers—and, indeed, few native Americans—have been able to avoid the intellectual escape of speaking about America as “paradoxical.”

Still there is evidently a strong unity in this nation and a basic homogeneity and stability in its valuations. Americans of all national origins, classes, regions, creeds, and colors, have something in common: a social *ethos*, a political creed. It is difficult to avoid the judgment that this “American Creed” is the cement in the structure of this great and disparate nation.

When the American Creed is once detected, the cacophony becomes a melody. The further observation then becomes apparent: that America, compared to every other country in Western civilization, large or small, has the *most explicitly expressed* system of general ideals in reference to human interrelations. This body of ideals is more widely understood and appreciated than similar ideals are anywhere else. The American Creed is not merely—as in some other countries—the implicit background of the nation’s political and judicial order as it functions. To be sure, the political creed of America is not very satisfactorily effectuated in actual social life. But as principles which *ought* to rule, the Creed has been made conscious to everyone in American society.

Sometimes one even gets the impression that there is a relation between the intense apprehension of high and uncompromising ideals and the spotty reality. One feels that it is, perhaps, the difficulty of giving reality to the *ethos* in this young and still somewhat unorganized nation—that it is the prevalence of “wrongs” in America, “wrongs” judged by the high standards of the national Creed—which helps make the ideals stand out so clearly. America is continuously struggling for its soul. These principles of social ethics have been hammered into easily remembered formula. All means of

---

This selection has been reprinted from Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma* (Vol. I, pp. 3–23, Copyright 1944 by Harper and Bros.,) by permission of the publisher.

intellectual communication are utilized to stamp them into everybody's mind. The schools teach them, the churches preach them. The courts pronounce their judicial decisions in their terms. They permeate editorials with a pattern of idealism so ingrained that the writers could scarcely free themselves from it even if they tried. They have fixed a custom of indulging in high-sounding generalities in all written or spoken addresses to the American public, otherwise so splendidly gifted for the matter-of-fact approach to things and problems. Even the stranger, when he has to appear before an American audience, feels this, if he is sensitive at all, and finds himself espousing the national Creed, as this is the only means by which a speaker can obtain human response from the people to whom he talks.

The Negro people in America are no exception to the national pattern. "It was a revelation to me to hear Negroes sometimes indulge in a glorification of American democracy in the same uncritical way as unsophisticated whites often do," relates the Dutch observer, Bertram Schrieke. A Negro political scientist, Ralph Bunche, observes:

Every man in the street, white, black, red or yellow, knows that this is "the land of the free," the "land of opportunity," the "cradle of liberty," the "home of democracy," that the American flag symbolizes the "equality of all men" and guarantees to us all "the protection of life, liberty and property," freedom of speech, freedom of religion and racial tolerance.

The present writer has made the same observation. The American Negroes know that they are a subordinated group experiencing, more than anybody else in the nation, the consequences of the fact that the Creed is not lived up to in America. Yet their faith in the Creed is not simply a means of pleading their unfulfilled rights. They, like the whites, are under the spell of the great national suggestion. With one part of themselves they actually believe, as do the whites, that the Creed is ruling America.

These ideals of the essential dignity of the individual human being, of the fundamental equality of all men, and of certain inalienable rights to freedom, justice, and a fair opportunity represent to the American people the essential meaning of the nation's early struggle for independence. In the clarity and intellectual boldness of the Enlightenment period these tenets were written into the Declaration of Independence, the Preamble of the Constitution, the Bill of Rights and into the constitutions of the several states. The ideals of the American Creed have thus become the highest law of the land. The Supreme Court pays its reverence to these general principles when it declares what is constitutional and what is not. They have been elaborated upon by

all national leaders, thinkers and statesmen. America has had, throughout its history, a continuous discussion of the principles and implications of democracy, a discussion which, in every epoch, measured by any standard, remained high, not only quantitatively but also qualitatively. The flow of learned treatises and popular tracts on the subject has not ebbed, nor is it likely to do so. In all wars, including the present one, the American Creed has been the ideological foundation of national morale.

## 2. AMERICAN NATIONALISM

The American Creed is identified with America's peculiar brand of nationalism, and it gives the common American his feeling of the historical mission of America in the world—a fact which just now becomes of global importance but which is also of highest significance for the . . . [Negro] problem. . . . The great national historian of the middle nineteenth century, George Bancroft, expressed this national feeling of pride and responsibility:

In the fulness of time a republic rose in the wilderness of America. Thousands of years had passed away before this child of the ages could be born. From whatever there was of good in the systems of the former centuries she drew her nourishment; the wrecks of the past were her warnings. . . . The fame of this only daughter of freedom went out into all the lands of the earth; from her the human race drew hope.

And Frederick J. Turner, who injected the naturalistic explanation into history that American democracy was a native-born product of the Western frontier, early in this century wrote in a similar vein:

Other nations have been rich and prosperous and powerful. But the United States has believed that it had an original contribution to make to the history of society by the production of a self-determining, self-restrained, intelligent democracy.

Wilson's fourteen points and Roosevelt's four freedoms have more recently expressed to the world the boundless idealistic aspirations of this American Creed. For a century and more before the present epoch, when the oceans gave reality to the Monroe Doctrine, America at least applauded heartily every uprising of the people in any corner of the world. This was a tradition from America's own Revolution. The political revolutionaries of foreign countries were approved even by the conservatives in America. And America wanted generously to share its precious ideals and its happiness in enjoying a society ruled by its own people with all who would come here. James Truslow Adams tells us:



The American dream that has lured tens of millions of all nations to our shores in the past century has not been a dream of merely material plenty, though that has doubtless counted heavily. It has been much more than that. It has been a dream of being able to grow to fullest development as man and woman, unhampered by the barriers which had slowly been erected in older civilizations, unrepressed by social orders which had developed for the benefit of classes rather than for the simple human being of any and every class. And that dream has been realized more fully in actual life here than anywhere else, though very imperfectly even among ourselves.

This is what the Western frontier country could say to the "East." And even the skeptic cannot help feeling that, perhaps, this youthful exuberant America has the destiny to do for the whole Old World what the frontier did to the old colonies. *American nationalism is permeated by the American Creed*, and therefore becomes international in its essence.

### 3. SOME HISTORICAL REFLECTIONS

It is remarkable that a vast democracy with so many cultural disparities has been able to reach this unanimity of ideals and to elevate them supremely over the threshold of popular perception. Totalitarian fascism and nazism have not in their own countries—at least not in the short range of their present rule—succeeded in accomplishing a similar result, in spite of the fact that those governments, after having subdued the principal precepts most akin to the American Creed, have attempted to coerce the minds of their people by means of a centrally controlled, ruthless, and scientifically contrived apparatus of propaganda and violence.

There are more things to be wondered about. The disparity of national origin, language, religion, and culture, during the long era of mass immigration into the United States, has been closely correlated with income differences and social class distinctions. Successive vintages of "Old Americans" have owned the country and held the dominant political power; they have often despised and exploited "the foreigners." To this extent conditions in America must be said to have been particularly favorable to the stratification of a rigid class society.

But it has not come to be. On the question of why the trend took the other course, the historians, from Turner on, point to the free land and the boundless resources. The persistent drive from the Western frontier—now and then swelling into great tides as in the Jeffersonian movement around 1800, the Jacksonian movement a generation later, and the successive third-party movements and breaks in the traditional parties—could, however, reach its historical potency only because of the fact that America, from the Revolution onward, had an equalitarian creed as a going national *ethos*. The economic determinants and the force of the ideals can be shown to be interrelated. But

the latter should not be relegated to merely a dependent variable. Vernon L. Parrington, the great historian of the development of the American mind, writes thus:

The humanitarian idealism of the Declaration [of Independence] has always echoed as a battle-cry in the hearts of those who dream of an America dedicated to democratic ends. It cannot be long ignored or repudiated, for sooner or later it returns to plague the council of practical politics. It is constantly breaking out in fresh revolt. . . . Without its freshening influence our political history would have been much more sordid and materialistic.

Indeed, the new republic began its career with a reaction. Charles Beard, in *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States*, and a group of modern historians, throwing aside the much cherished national mythology which had blurred the difference in spirit between the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, have shown that the latter was conceived in considerable suspicion against democracy and fear of "the people." It was dominated by property consciousness and designed as a defense against the democratic spirit let loose during the Revolution.

But, admitting all this, the Constitution which actually emerged out of the compromises in the drafting convention provided for the most democratic state structure in existence anywhere in the world at that time. And many of the safeguards so skillfully thought out by the conservatives to protect "the rich, the wellborn, and the capable" against majority rule melted when the new order began to function. Other conservative safeguards have fastened themselves into the political pattern. And "in the ceaseless conflict between the man and the dollar, between democracy and property"—again to quote Parrington—property has for long periods triumphed and blocked the will of the people. And there are today large geographical regions and fields of human life which, particularly when measured by the high goals of the American Creed, are conspicuously lagging. But taking the broad historical view, the American Creed has triumphed. It has given the main direction to change in this country. America has had gifted conservative statesmen and national leaders, and they have often determined the course of public affairs. But with few exceptions, only the liberals have gone down in history as national heroes. America is, as we shall point out, conservative in fundamental principles, and in much more than that, though hopefully experimentalistic in regard to much of the practical arrangements in society. But *the principles conserved are liberal* and some, indeed, are radical.

America got this dynamic Creed much as a political convenience and a device of strategy during the long struggle with the English Crown, the London

Parliament and the various British powerholders in the colonies. It served as the rallying center for the growing national unity that was needed. Later it was a necessary device for building up a national morale in order to enlist and sustain the people in the Revolutionary War. In this spirit the famous declarations were resolved, the glorious speeches made, the inciting pamphlets written and spread. "The appeal to arms would seem to have been brought about by a minority of the American people, directed by a small group of skillful leaders, who, like Indian scouts, covered their tracks so cleverly, that only the keenest trailers can now follow their course and understand their strategy."

But the Creed, once set forth and disseminated among the American people, became so strongly entrenched in their hearts, and the circumstances have since then been so relatively favorable, that it has succeeded in keeping itself very much alive for more than a century and a half.

#### 4. THE ROOTS OF THE AMERICAN CREED IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF ENLIGHTENMENT

The American Creed is a humanistic liberalism developing out of the epoch of Enlightenment when America received its national consciousness and its political structure. The Revolution did not stop short of anything less than the heroic desire for the "emancipation of human nature." The enticing flavor of the eighteenth century, so dear to every intellectual and rationalist, has not been lost on the long journey up to the present time. Let us quote a contemporary exegesis:

Democracy is a form of political association in which the general control and direction of the commonwealth is habitually determined by the bulk of the community in accordance with understandings and procedures providing for popular participation and consent. Its postulates are:

1. The essential dignity of man, the importance of protecting and cultivating his personality on a fraternal rather than upon a differential basis, of reconciling the needs of the personality within the frame-work of the common good in a formula of liberty, justice, welfare.
2. The perfectibility of man; confidence in the possibilities of the human personality, as over against the doctrines of caste, class, and slavery.
3. That the gains of commonwealths are essentially mass gains rather than the efforts of the few and should be diffused as promptly as possible throughout the community without too great delay or too wide a spread in differentials.
4. Confidence in the value of the consent of the governed expressed in institutions, understandings and practices as a basis of order, liberty, justice.
5. The value of decisions arrived at by common counsel rather than by violence and brutality.

These postulates rest upon (1) reason in regarding the essential nature of the

political man, upon (2) observation, experience and inference, and (3) the fulfillment of the democratic ideal is strengthened by a faith in the final triumph of ideals of human behavior in general and of political behavior in particular. [C. E. Merriam.]

For practical purposes the main norms of the American Creed as usually pronounced are centered in the belief in equality and in the rights to liberty. In the Declaration of Independence—as in the earlier Virginia Bill of Rights—equality was given the supreme rank and the rights to liberty are posited as derived from equality. This logic was even more clearly expressed in Jefferson's original formulation of the first of the "self-evident truths": "All men are created equal *and from that equal creation* they derive rights inherent and unalienable, among which are the preservation of life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

Liberty, in a sense, was easiest to reach. It is a vague ideal: everything turns around *whose* liberty is preserved, to *what extent* and *in what direction*. In society liberty for one may mean the suppression of liberty for others. The result of competition will be determined by who got a head start and who is handicapped. In America as everywhere else—and sometimes, perhaps, on the average, a little more ruthlessly—liberty often provided an opportunity for the stronger to rob the weaker. Against this, the equalitarianism in the Creed has been persistently revolting. The struggle is far from ended. The reason why American liberty was not more dangerous to equality was, of course, the open frontier and the free land. When opportunity became bounded in the last generation, the inherent conflict between equality and liberty flared up. Equality is slowly winning. The New Deal during the 'thirties was a landslide.<sup>1</sup>

## 5. THE ROOTS IN CHRISTIANITY

If the European philosophy of Enlightenment was one of the ideological roots of the American Creed, another equally important one was Christianity, particularly as it took the form in the colonies of various lower class Protestant sects, split off from the Anglican Church.<sup>2</sup> "Democracy was envisaged in religious terms long before it assumed a political terminology."

<sup>1</sup> New Dealers, like most American liberals today, pronounce liberty before equality. But they do so in the eighteenth century Jeffersonian sense, not in the American businessman's sense. The "four freedoms" of Franklin D. Roosevelt are liberties, but they are liberties to get equality, not liberties of the stronger to infringe on the weaker. In this sense, equality is logically derivable from liberty, just as liberty is from equality: if there is real liberty for all there will be equal opportunity and equal justice for all, and there will even be social equality limited only by minor biological inequalities.

<sup>2</sup> While the Protestant sects emphasized the elements of the American Creed, it should not be forgotten that there was an older trait of humanitarianism and equalitarianism in the creed of the Medieval Church.



It is true that modern history has relegated to the category of the pious patriotic myths the popular belief that all the colonies had been founded to get religious liberty, which could not be had in the Old World. Some of the colonies were commercial adventures and the settlers came to them, and even to the religious colonies later, to improve their economic status. It is also true that the churches in the early colonial times did not always exactly represent the idea of democratic government in America but most often a harsher tyranny over people's souls and behavior than either King or Parliament ever cared to wield.

But the myth itself is a social reality with important effects. It was strong already in the period of the Revolution and continued to grow. A small proportion of new immigrants throughout the nineteenth century came for religious reasons, or partly so, and a great many more wanted to rationalize their uprooting and transplantation in such terms. So religion itself in America took on a spirit of flight for liberty. The Bible is full of support for such a spirit. It consists to a large extent of the tales of oppression and redemption from oppression: in the Old Testament of the Jewish people and in the New Testament of the early Christians. The rich and mighty are most often the wrongdoers, while the poor and lowly are the followers of God and Christ.

The basic teaching of Protestant Christianity is democratic. We are all poor sinners and have the same heavenly father. The concept of natural rights in the philosophy of Enlightenment corresponded rather closely with the idea of moral law in the Christian faith:

The doctrine of the free individual, postulating the gradual escape of men from external political control, as they learned to obey the moral law, had its counterpart in the emphasis of evangelicism upon the freedom of the regenerated man from the terrors of the Old Testament code framed for the curbing of unruly and sinful generations. The philosophy of progress was similar to the Utopian hopes of the millenarians. The mission of American democracy to save the world from the oppression of autocrats was a secular version of the destiny of Christianity to save the world from the governance of Satan. [R. H. Gabriel.]

But apart from the historical problem of the extent to which church and religion in America actually inspired the American Creed, they became a powerful container and preserver of the Creed when it was once in existence. This was true from the beginning. While in Europe after the Napoleonic Wars the increasing power of the churches everywhere spelled a period of reaction, the great revivals beginning around 1800 in America were a sort of religious continuation of the Revolution.

In this way great numbers whom the more-or-less involved theory of natural rights had escaped came under the leveling influence of a religious doctrine which held

that all men were equal in the sight of God. Throughout the Revival period the upper classes looked upon the movement as "a religious distemper" which spread like a contagious disease, and they pointed out that it made its greatest appeal to "those of weak intellect and unstable emotions, women, adolescents, and Negroes." But to the poor farmer who had helped to win the Revolution only to find himself oppressed as much by the American ruling classes as he had ever been by Crown officials, the movement was "the greatest stir of Religion since the day of Pentecost." [G. G. Johnson.]

Religion is still a potent force in American life. "They are a religious people," observed Lord Bryce about Americans a half a century ago, with great understanding for the importance of this fact for their national ideology. American scientific observers are likely to get their attentions fixed upon the process of progressive secularization to the extent that they do not see this main fact, that America probably is still the most religious country in the Western world. Political leaders are continuously deducing the American Creed out of the Bible. Vice-President Henry Wallace, in his historic speech of May 8, 1942, to the Free World Association, where he declared the present war to be "a fight between a slave world and a free world" and declared himself for "a people's peace" to inaugurate "the century of the common man," spoke thus:

The idea of freedom—the freedom that we in the United States know and love so well—is derived from the Bible with its extraordinary emphasis on the dignity of the individual. Democracy is the only true political expression of Christianity.

The prophets of the Old Testament were the first to preach social justice. But that which was sensed by the prophets many centuries before Christ was not given complete and powerful political expression until our Nation was formed as a Federal Union a century and a half ago.

Ministers have often been reactionaries in America. They have often tried to stifle free speech; they have organized persecution of unpopular dissenters and have even, in some regions, been active as the organizers of the Ku Klux Klan and similar "un-American" (in terms of the American Creed) movements. But, on the whole, church and religion in America are a force strengthening the American Creed. The fundamental tenets of Christianity press for expression even in the most bigoted setting. And again on the whole, American religion is not particularly bigoted, but on the contrary, rather open-minded. The mere fact that there are many denominations, and that there is competition between them, forces American churches to a greater tolerance and ecumenical understanding and to a greater humanism and interest in social problems than the people in the churches would otherwise call for.

I also believe that American churches and their teachings have contributed

something essential to the emotional temper of the Creed and, indeed, of the American people. Competent and sympathetic foreign observers have always noted the generosity and helpfulness of Americans. This and the equally conspicuous formal democracy in human contacts have undoubtedly had much to do with the predominantly lower class origin of the American people, and even more perhaps, with the mobility and the opportunities—what de Tocqueville called the “equality of condition”—in the nation when it was in its formative stage. But I cannot help feeling that the Christian neighborliness of the common American reflects, also, an influence from the churches. Apart from its origin, this temper of the Americans is part and parcel of the American Creed. It shows up in the Americans’ readiness to make financial sacrifices for charitable purposes. No country has so many cheerful givers as America. It was not only “rugged individualism,” nor a relatively continuous prosperity, that made it possible for America to get along without a publicly organized welfare policy almost up to the Great Depression in the ‘thirties, but it was also the world’s most generous private charity.

#### 6. THE ROOTS IN ENGLISH LAW

The third main ideological influence behind the American Creed is English law. The indebtedness of American civilization to the culture of the mother country is nowhere else as great as in respect to the democratic concept of law and order, which it inherited almost without noticing it. It is the glory of England that, after many generations of hard struggle, it established the principles of justice, equity, and equality before the law even in an age when the rest of Europe (except for the cultural islands of Switzerland, Iceland, and Scandinavia) based personal security on the arbitrary police and on *lettres de cachet*.<sup>3</sup>

This concept of a government “of laws and not of men” contained certain fundamentals of both equality and liberty. It will be a part of our task to study how these elemental demands are not nearly realized even in present-day America. But in the American Creed they have never been questioned. And it is no exaggeration to state that the philosophical ideas of human equality and the inalienable rights to life, liberty, and property, hastily sowed on American ground in a period of revolution when they were opportune—even allowing ever so much credit to the influences from the free life on the Western frontier—would not have struck root as they did if the soil had not already been cultivated by English law.

Law and order represent such a crucial element both in the American Creed and in the spotty American reality that, at a later stage of our argument . . .

<sup>3</sup> [A form of arbitrary arrest-order.]

we shall have to devote some further remarks to this particular set of ideological roots.

#### 7. AMERICAN CONSERVATISM

These ideological forces—the Christian religion and the English law—also explain why America through all its adventures has so doggedly stuck to its high ideals: why it has been so conservative in keeping to liberalism as a national creed even if not as its actual way of life. This conservatism, in fundamental principles, has, to a great extent, been perverted into a nearly fetishistic cult of the Constitution. This is unfortunate since the 150-year-old Constitution is in many respects impractical and ill-suited for modern conditions and since, furthermore, the drafters of the document made it technically difficult to change even if there were no popular feeling against change.

The worship of the Constitution also is a most flagrant violation of the American Creed which, as far as the technical arrangements for executing the power of the people are concerned, is strongly opposed to stiff formulas. Jefferson actually referred to the American form of government as an experiment. The young Walt Whitman, among many other liberals before and after him, expressed the spirit of the American Revolution more faithfully when he demanded "continual additions to our great experiment of how much liberty society will bear." Modern historical studies of how the Constitution came to be as it is reveal that the Constitutional Convention was nearly a plot against the common people. Until recently, the Constitution has been used to block the popular will: the Fourteenth Amendment inserted after the Civil War to protect the civil rights of the poor freedmen has, for instance, been used more to protect business corporations against public control.

But when all this is said, it does not give more than one side of the cult of the Constitution. The common American is not informed on the technicalities and has never thought of any great difference in spirit between the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. When he worships the Constitution, it is an act of American nationalism, and in this the American Creed is inextricably blended. The liberal Creed, even in its dynamic formulation by Jefferson, is adhered to by every American. The unanimity around, and the explicitness of, this Creed is the great wonder of America. The "Old Americans," all those who have thoroughly come to identify themselves with the nation—which are many more than the Sons and Daughters of the Revolution—adhere to the Creed as the faith of their ancestors. The others—the Negroes, the new immigrants, the Jews, and other disadvantaged and unpopular groups—could not possibly have invented a system of political ideals which



better corresponded to their interests. So, by the logic of the unique American history, it has developed that the rich and secure, out of pride and conservatism, and the poor and insecure, out of dire need, have come to profess the identical social ideals. The reflecting observer comes to feel that this spiritual convergence, more than America's strategic position behind the oceans and its immense material resources, is what makes the nation great and what promises it a still greater future. Behind it all is the historical reality which makes it possible for the President to appeal to all in the nation in this way: "Let us not forget that we are all descendants from revolutionaries and immigrants."

#### 8. THE AMERICAN CONCEPTION OF LAW AND ORDER

While the Creed is important and is enacted into law, it is not lived up to in practice. To understand this we shall have to examine American attitudes toward law. It is necessary to discuss the legal tradition of America at the outset, since it gives a unique twist to each of the specific problems that we shall take up. . . .

Americans are accustomed to inscribe their ideals in laws, ranging from their national Constitution to their local traffic rules. American laws thus often contain, in addition to the actually enforced rules (that is, "laws" in the ordinary technical meaning of the term), other rules which are not valid or operative but merely express the legislators' hopes, desires, advice or dreams. There is nothing in the legal form to distinguish the latter rules from the former ones. Much of the political discussion has to do with the question of strengthening the administration of laws or taking other measures so as to enforce them. Between the completely enforced rules and the unenforceable ones there are many intermediary types which are sometimes, under some conditions, or in some part, only conditionally and incompletely enforced.

To an extent this peculiar cultural trait of America is explainable by the fact that the nation is young and, even more, that it owes its state structure to a revolution—a revolution in the courageously rationalistic age of Enlightenment. Americans have kept to this custom of inscribing their ideals in laws.<sup>4</sup>

The "function," from the legislator's point of view, of legislating national ideals is, of course, a pedagogical one of giving them high publicity and prestige. Legislating ideals has also a "function" of dedicating the nation to the

<sup>4</sup> Other countries, and I am thinking primarily of Great Britain, Holland, and Scandinavia, also sometimes commit their ideals to legislation, but they do so rarely and with great circumspection and extreme caution. On the whole, these countries have left even the essential liberties of citizens in a democracy unformulated as merely implied in all legislation and judicial procedure. Yet they have afforded a greater protection of the common citizens' liberties under the law than America (although they have not faced the same problems as America).

task of gradually approaching them. In a new nation made up of immigrants from all corners of the world and constantly growing by the arrival of other immigrants, carrying with them a greatly diversified cultural heritage, these goals must have stood out as important to statesmen and political thinkers.

Another cultural trait of Americans is a relatively low degree of respect for law and order. This trait, as well as the other one just mentioned, is of paramount importance for the Negro problem. . . . There is a relation between these two traits, of high ideals in some laws and low respect for all laws, but this relation is by no means as simple as it appears.

#### 9. NATURAL LAW AND AMERICAN PURITANISM

On this point we must observe somewhat more closely the moralistic attitude toward law in America, expressed in the common belief that there is a "higher law" behind and above the specific laws contained in constitutions, statutes and other regulations.

The idea of a "natural law" has long been a part of our common line of legal tradition. When the elected "lawman" in pre-Christian times "spoke the law" to the assembled arms-bearing freemen, he was not assumed to make the law or invent it but to expound something which existed prior to and independent of himself and all others participating in the procedure. The idea of a "higher law," as well as the whole procedure of letting it become a social reality and, indeed, the entire legal system as it functioned and grew in the northern countries, had deep roots in primitive religion and magic, as is revealed by studies of the contemporary mythology and the peculiar formalistic mechanisms of the creation and operation of law. The distinguishing mark of the particular type of magical thinking in these countries was, however, that out of it developed what we now understand to be the characteristic respect for law of modern democracy.

When representative bodies, among them the English Parliament, emerged as political institutions, they also did not conceive of themselves as "legislatures" in the modern sense, but pretended only to state the law that already "existed." Even when these legislatures began to take on new functions and to make rules to meet new situations, they still kept up the fiction that they only "declared" or "explained" the law as it existed. The modern idea of creating laws by "legislation" is thus a late product in the historical development of Western democracy, and it was never totally freed from the connotation of its subordination to a "higher law" existing independent of all formally fixed rules.

In America the Revolution gave a tremendous spread to this primitive idea

of "natural law" as it, in the meantime, had been developed in the philosophies of Enlightenment under the further influences of Greek speculation, Roman law, medieval scholasticism, and free naturalistic speculation since Francis Bacon, Thomas Hobbes and Hugo Grotius. American religion supported it strongly. The idea fixed itself upon the entire American state structure. "A peculiarity of American democracy had been from the beginning that it put its faith in a higher law rather than in the changing will of the people." The role given to the Supreme Court and the tradition of this tribunal not to "legislate," which as a court it could hardly have the right to do, but to refer to the higher principles back of the Constitution strengthened still more the grip of this old idea on the mind of the Americans.

The adherence even in modern times to this idealistic conception of the origin and reality of the judicial order undoubtedly, in one way, raised its moral prestige among the American people as it had done earlier in the history of the Old World. No careful observer of the present American scene should miss seeing . . . the common American's pride in and devotion to the nation's judicial system and its legal institutions. Government authorities constantly appeal to this idealistic pride and devotion of the citizens in order to enforce the law. In America, there is a continuous endeavor to keep the judicial system orderly, and there is a continuous educational campaign on behalf of this idealism. Undoubtedly *the idealistic concept of American law as an emanation of "natural law" is a force which strengthens the rule of law in America.*

But, in another way, it is at the same time most detrimental to automatic, unreflecting law observance on the part of the citizens. Laws become disputable on moral grounds. Each legislative statute is judged by the common citizen in terms of his conception of the higher "natural law." He decides whether it is "just" or "unjust" and has *the dangerous attitude that, if it is unjust, he may feel free to disobey it.* The strong stress on individual rights and the almost complete silence on the citizen's duties in the American Creed make this reaction the more natural. The Jeffersonian distrust of government—"that government is best which governs least"—soon took the form, particularly on the Western frontier, of a distrust and disrespect for the enacted laws. The doctrine of a higher law fosters an "extra-legal" disposition towards the state and excuses illegal acts.

But the frontier was not, in this respect, fundamentally different from the old colonies. Without stepping outside the American tradition, Garrison could pronounce even the Constitution to be a "compact with Hell" on the slavery issue. This, by itself, would not have been dangerous to democracy, if he had

meant to argue only for a change of the Constitution. But he and many more Northerners of conscientious inclinations found it a moral obligation not to obey the fugitive slave laws. Here the citizen does not stop to criticize the laws and the judicial system and demand a change in them, but he sets his own conception of the "higher law" above the existing laws in society and feels it his right to disobey them. It is against this background also that we shall have to study the amazing disrespect for law and order which even today characterizes the Southern states in America and constitutes such a large part of the Negro problem. This anarchistic tendency founded upon a primitive concept of natural law has never left American political speculation or American popular thought.

This anarchistic tendency in America's legal culture becomes even more dangerous because of the presence of a quite different tendency: *a desire to regulate human behavior tyrannically by means of formal laws*. This last tendency is a heritage from early American puritanism which was sometimes fanatical and dogmatic and always had a strong inclination to mind other people's business. So we find that this American, who is so proud to announce that he will not obey laws other than those which are "good" and "just," as soon as the discussion turns to something which in his opinion is bad and unjust, will emphatically pronounce that "there ought to be a law against . . ." To demand and legislate all sorts of laws against this or that is just as much part of American freedom as to disobey the laws when they are enacted. America has become a country where exceedingly much is permitted in practice but at the same time exceedingly much is forbidden in law.

By instituting a national prohibition of the sale of liquor without taking adequate steps for its enforcement, America was nearly drenched in corruption and organized crime until the statute was repealed. The laws against gambling have, on a smaller scale, the same effect at the present time. And many more of those unrespected laws are damaging in so far as they, for example, prevent a rational organization of various public activities, or when they can be used by individuals for blackmailing purposes or by the state or municipal authorities to persecute unpopular individuals or groups. Such practices are conducive to a general disrespect for law in America. Actually today it is a necessity in everyday living for the common good American citizen to decide for himself which laws should be observed and which not.

#### 10. THE FALTERING JUDICIAL ORDER

. . . The conflict should not, however, be formulated only in terms of the national ideology. Or, rather, this ideology is not fully explainable in terms of



the thoughts and feeling out of which the American Creed was composed.

A low degree of law observance already became habitual and nationally cherished in colonial times when the British Parliament and Crown, increasingly looked upon as a foreign ruler by the Americans, insisted upon passing laws which the Americans considered unwise, impractical or simply unjust. The free life on the frontier also strained legal bonds. There the conflict between puritanical intolerance and untamed desire for individual freedom clashed more severely than anywhere else. The mass immigration and the cultural heterogeneity were other factors hampering the fixation of a firm legal order in America. The presence of states within the nation with different sets of laws and the high mobility between states were contributing factors. The jurisdictional friction between states and the federal government, the technical and political difficulties in changing the federal Constitution, the consequent great complexity of the American legal system, and the mass of legal fiction and plain trickery also are among the important factors. For example, it cannot be conducive to the highest respect for the legal system that the federal government is forced to carry out important social legislation under the fiction that it is regulating "interstate commerce," or that federal prosecuting agencies punish dangerous gangsters for income tax evasion rather than for the felonies they have committed.

So this idealistic America also became the country of legalistic formalism. Contrary to America's basic ideology of natural law and its strong practical sense, "the letter of the law," as opposed to its "spirit," came to have an excessive importance. The weak bureaucracy became tangled up in "red tape." The clever lawyer came to play a large and unsavory role in politics, in business, and in the everyday life of the citizens. The Americans thus got a judicial order which is in many respects contrary to all their inclinations.

Under the influence of all these and many other factors the common American citizen has acquired a comparatively low degree of personal identification with the state and the legal machinery. An American, when he accidentally comes by the scene of a crime or of an attempt by the police to seize an offender, is, on the average, more inclined to hurry on in order not to get involved in something unpleasant, and less inclined to stop and help the arm of the law, than a Britisher or a Scandinavian would be under similar circumstances. He is more likely to look on his country's and his community's politics and administration as something to be indulged and tolerated, as outside his own responsibility, and less likely to think and act as a would-be legislator, in a cooperative endeavor to organize a decent social life. He is even inclined to dissociate himself from politics as something unworthy and to take

measures to keep the worthy things "out of politics." This is part of what Lord Bryce called "the fatalism of the multitude" in America. This political fatalism and the lack of identification and participation work as a vicious circle, being both cause and effect of corruption and political machine rule.

The authorities, when not relying upon the idealistic appeal, will most often meet the citizen's individualistic inclinations by trying to educate him to obey the law less in terms of collective interest than in terms of self-interest. They try to tell the young that "crime does not pay," which, in some areas, is a statement of doubtful truth.

In the exploitation of the new continent business leaders were not particular about whether or not the means they used corresponded either with the natural law or with the specific laws of the nation or the states. This became of greater importance because of the central position of business in the formation of national aspirations and ideals. When Theodore Roosevelt exclaimed: "Damn the law! I want the canal built," he spoke the language of his contemporary business world and of the ordinary American.

We have to conceive of all the numerous breaches of law, which an American citizen commits or learns about in the course of ordinary living, as psychologically a series of shocks which condition him and the entire society to a low degree of law observance. The American nation has, further, experienced disappointments in its attempts to legislate social change, which, with few exceptions, have been badly prepared and inefficiently carried out. The almost traumatic effects of these historical disappointments have been enhanced by America's conspicuous success in so many fields other than legislation. One of the traumas was the Reconstruction legislation, which attempted to give Negroes civil rights in the South; another one was the anti-trust legislation pressed by the Western farmers and enacted to curb the growth of monopolistic finance capitalism; a third one was the prohibition amendment.

## II. INTELLECTUAL DEFEATISM

Against this background, and remembering the puritan tendency in America to make all sorts of haphazard laws directed at symptoms and not at causes and without much consideration for social facts and possibilities, it is understandable that the social scientists, particularly the sociologists, in America have developed a defeatist attitude towards the possibility of inducing social change by means of legislation.<sup>5</sup> The political "do-nothing" tendency is strong

<sup>5</sup> . . . We are here referring not to the specialists on law and law enforcement but to the general sociologist, economist, or political scientist when he meets legislation as an angle of his respective problems.

in present-day social science in America. It is, typically enough, developed as a *general* theory—actually as a scientific translation of the old natural law idea in its negative import. The social scientists simply reflect the general distrust of politics and legislation that is widespread among the educated classes of Americans.

Of particular importance to us is that this view is common even among Negro intellectuals when reflecting on various aspects of the Negro problem. The failure of Reconstruction had especially severe effects on them. Younger Negro intellectuals are disposed to express disbelief in the possibility that much can be won by politics, legislation, and law suits, and have become inclined to set their hopes on what they conceive of as more fundamental changes of the economic structure. Sometimes they think in terms of an economic revolution. But, whether their thoughts take such a radical direction or stay conservative, a common trait is fatalism in regard to politics and legislation. Fatalism in regard to *res publica* is, however, by no means a Negro characteristic. It is a common American disease of the democratic spirit which is on the way to becoming chronic.

We shall meet this tendency as it affects various aspects of the Negro problem as we go along. A few critical remarks on the general theory that "stateways cannot change folkways" need to be made at the start. In this abstract form and as applied to various specific problems, the theory cannot be true, since in other parts of the world similar changes are effectuated by means of legislation. The theory must, therefore, be qualified in the light of specific American conditions. But even in America new legislation, infringing upon old customs and upon individual and local interests, is often made fairly watertight nowadays. The general explanation why some laws have been more successful than others in America is that *they have been better prepared and better administered*.

This means that, among the explanations for the general disrepute and deficiency of law and order in America, there are two other factors: *the habit of passing laws without careful investigation, and the relatively low standard of American administration of law*. . . . On the former point we shall restrict ourselves to quoting a high authority: "For nothing is done with so little of scientific or orderly method as the legislative making of laws." [Roscoe Pound.]

These two factors are strategic. When the foolish attempts to suppress symptoms of ills while leaving the causes untouched become censored, and when lawmaking increasingly becomes an important task of scientific social engi-

neering, and when, further, administration becomes independent, legal, impartial, and efficient, better laws will be made, and they will be better enforced even in America. It is a problem to explain why lawmaking and administration have been so backward in a nation where private business and also private agencies for public good are often excellently organized.

The mere possibility of change in these two factors shows the fallacy of the general theory that law cannot change custom. In the face of the tendency in American society toward more careful lawmaking and improved administration the theory appears politically as well as theoretically biased: biased against induced change. . . . [There are] other dynamic tendencies in American society favoring the same development, the chief among them being, perhaps, the growing cultural homogeneity and the increasing political and social participation of the masses. Many social scientists tend not only to ignore these changes, but to deny them and, in some cases to oppose them.

If in the course of time Americans are brought to be a law-abiding people, and if they at the same time succeed in keeping alive not only their conservatism in fundamental principles and their pride and devotion to their national political institutions, but also some of their puritan eagerness and courage in attempting to reform themselves and the world—redirected somewhat from the old Biblical inclination of thinking only in terms of prescriptions and purges—this great nation may become the master builder of a stable but progressive commonwealth.

## 12. "LIP-SERVICE"

The conflict in the American concept of law and order is only one side of the "moral overstrain" of the nation. America believes in and aspires to something much higher than its plane of actual life. The subordinate position of Negroes is perhaps the most glaring conflict in the American conscience and the greatest unsolved task for American democracy. But it is by no means the only one. Donald Young complains:

In our more introspective moments, nearly all of us Americans will admit that our government contains imperfections and anachronisms. We who have been born and brought up under the evils of gang rule, graft, political incompetence, inadequate representation, and some of the other weaknesses of democracy, American plan, have developed mental callouses and are no longer sensitive to them.

The *popular* explanation of the disparity in America between ideals and actual behavior is that Americans do not have the slightest intention of living up to the ideals which they talk about and put into their Constitution and



laws. Many Americans are accustomed to talk loosely and disparagingly about adherence to the American Creed as "lip-service" and even "hypocrisy." Foreigners are even more prone to make such a characterization.

This explanation is too superficial. To begin with, the true hypocrite sins in secret; he conceals his faults. The American, on the contrary, is strongly and sincerely "against sin," even, and not least, his own sins. He investigates his faults, puts them on record, and shouts them from the housetops, adding the most severe recriminations against himself, including the accusation of hypocrisy. If all the world is well informed about the political corruption, organized crime, and faltering system of justice in America, it is primarily not due to its malice but to American publicity about its own imperfections. America's handling of the Negro problem has been criticized most emphatically by white Americans since long before the Revolution, and the criticism has steadily gone on and will not stop until America has completely reformed itself.

Bryce observed: "They know, and are content that all the world should know, the worst as well as the best of themselves. They have a boundless faith in free inquiry and full discussion. They admit the possibility of any number of temporary errors and delusions." The present author remembers, from his first visit to this country as an inexperienced social scientist at the end of the 'twenties, how confused he often felt when Americans in all walks of life were trustingly asking him to tell them what was "wrong with this country." It is true that this open-mindedness, particularly against the outside world, may have decreased considerably since then on account of the depression, and that the present War might work in the same direction, though this is not certain; and it is true also that the opposite tendency always had its strong representation in America. But, by and large, America has been and will remain, in all probability, a society which is eager to indulge in self-scrutiny and to welcome criticism.

This American eagerness to get on record one's sins and their causes is illustrated in the often quoted letter by Patrick Henry (1772), where he confessed that he had slaves because he was "drawn along by the general inconvenience of living here without them."

I will not, I cannot, justify it. However culpable my conduct, I will so far pay my devoir to virtue as to own the excellence and rectitude of her precepts, and lament my want of conformity to them.

American rationalism and moralism spoke through Patrick Henry. America as a nation is like its courageous and eloquent son of the Revolution. It is continuously paying its *devoir* to virtue; it is repeating its allegiance to

the full American Creed by lamenting its want of conformity to it. The strength and security of the nation helped this puritan tradition to continue. No weak nation anxious for its future could ever have done it. Americans believe in their own ability and in progress. They are at bottom moral optimists.

In a great nation there is, of course, division of labor. Some Americans do most of the sinning, but most do some of it. Some specialize in muckraking, preaching, and lamentation; but there is a little of the muckraker and preacher in all Americans. On the other hand, superficially viewed, Americans often appear cynical. Their social science has lately developed along a deterministic track of amoralistic nonconcernedness; but this is itself easily seen to be a moralistic reaction. As a matter of fact this young nation is the least cynical of all nations. It is not hypocritical in the usual sense of the word, but labors persistently with its moral problems. It is taking its Creed very seriously indeed, and this is the reason why the ideals are not only continuously discussed but also represent a social force—why they receive more than “lip-service” in the collective life of the nation. The cultural unity of the nation is this common sharing in both the consciousness of sins and the devotion to high ideals.

Americans accuse themselves, and are accused by others, of being materialists. But they are equally extreme in the other direction. Sometimes an American feels moved to put the matter right, as Josiah Royce did when he explained:

When foreigners accuse us of extraordinary love for gain, and of practical materialism, they fail to see how largely we are a nation of idealists. Yet that we are such a nation is something constantly brought to the attention of those whose calling requires them to observe any of the tendencies prevalent in our recent intellectual life in America.

The American [Negro] problem . . . would, indeed, have an entirely different prognosis if this fact were forgotten. . . .

## JOHN DEWEY

PART of the attraction of scientific methods of inquiry for Dewey was that these methods are basically social and self-corrective. The scientist works in a world-wide community of his fellow-scientists, not in isolation from them. The fund of experience on which he draws is not his alone; it is the shared heritage of all scientists from their predecessors; nor are the results that a scientist achieves his alone—they are shared by his fellow-scientists in the present and passed on to all the scientists of the future. The life of science is, thus, a moral life and a paradigm of co-operative inquiry. The success that has attended scientific inquiry warrants the attempt to extend its methods to other aspects of human concern.

In particular, Dewey regarded the democratic ordering of society as the extension of experimental inquiry to social life. Like the ideal scientific community, the ideal democratic community allows freedom of inquiry, welcomes diversity of opinion ("while it insists that inquiry brings the evidence of observed facts to bear to effect a consensus of conclusions"), encourages freedom of communication, so that each discovery can become available to every individual, and discourages the holding of these tentative conclusions as dogmatic finalities or fixed truth. No actual democratic society has ever perfectly fulfilled these exacting requirements of the ideal, but in some measure each democracy has striven toward this ideal.

Because, in Dewey's thought, striving and the goals of striving, means and ends, are inextricably involved in each other, he insisted that democratic ideals can be reached only by democratic methods. Democracy cannot be established by command; governments cannot legislate democracy. When small groups of individuals join together voluntarily to seek, by processes of shared experience, the road to some common good, the foundations of democratic society are laid. The multiplicity of these "voluntary associations" and the diversity of the goods toward which they strive may lead to mutual frustration. It is here that Dewey envisages the place of democratic government in democratic society as the servant of these many groups, charged with the responsibility of preventing, so far as possible, their mutual frustration.

The following selection has been taken from John Dewey's *Freedom and Culture* (1939).



## FREEDOM AND CULTURE

## CHAPTER VII: DEMOCRACY AND AMERICA

I make no apology for linking what is said [here] . . . with the name of Thomas Jefferson. For he was the first modern to state in human terms the principles of democracy. Were I to make an apology, it would be that in the past I have concerned myself unduly, if a comparison has to be made, with the English writers who have attempted to state the ideals of self-governing communities and the methods appropriate to their realization. If I now prefer to refer to Jefferson it is not, I hope, because of American provincialism, even though I believe that only one who was attached to American soil and who took a consciously alert part in the struggles of the country to attain its independence, could possibly have stated as thoroughly and intimately as Jefferson the aims embodied in the American tradition: "the definitions and axioms of a free government," as Lincoln called them. Nor is the chief reason for going to him, rather than to Locke or Bentham or Mill, his greater sobriety of judgment due to that constant tempering of theory with practical experience which also kept his democratic doctrine within human bounds.

The chief reason is that Jefferson's formulation is moral through and through: in its foundations, its methods, its ends. The heart of his faith is expressed in his words "Nothing is unchangeable but inherent and inalienable rights of man." The words in which he stated the moral basis of free institutions have gone out of vogue. We repeat the opening words of the Declaration of Independence, but unless we translate them they are couched in a language that, even when it comes readily to our tongue, does not penetrate today to the brain. He wrote: "These truths are self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with inherent and unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Today we are wary of anything purporting to be self-evident truths; we are not given to associating politics with the plans of the Creator; the doctrine of natural rights which governed his style of expression has been weakened by historic and by philosophic criticism.

To put ourselves in touch with Jefferson's position we have therefore to translate the word "natural" into *moral*. Jefferson was under the influence of the Deism of his time. Nature and the plans of a benevolent and wise Creator were never far apart in his reflections. But his fundamental beliefs remain

---

This selection has been reprinted from John Dewey, *Freedom and Culture*, by permission of G. P. Putnam's Sons, N.Y., publishers, Copyright, 1939, by John Dewey, pp. 155-176.



unchanged in substance if we forget all special associations with the word *Nature* and speak instead of ideal aims and values to be realized—aims which, although ideal, are not located in the clouds but are backed by something deep and indestructible in the needs and demands of humankind.

Were I to try to connect in any detail what I have to say with the details of Jefferson's speeches and letters—he wrote no theoretical treatises—I should probably seem to be engaged in a partisan undertaking; I should at times be compelled to indulge in verbal exegesis so as to attribute to him ideas not present in his mind. Nevertheless, there are three points contained in what has to be said about American democracy that I shall here explicitly connect with his name. In the first place, in the quotation made, it was the *ends* of democracy, the rights of *man*—not of men in the plural—which are unchangeable. It was not the forms and mechanisms through which inherent moral claims are realized that are to persist without change. Professed Jeffersonians have often not even followed the words of the one whose disciples they say they are, much less his spirit. For he said:

I know that laws and institutions must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind. . . . As new discoveries are made, new truths disclosed, and manners and opinions change with the change of circumstances, institutions must change also and keep pace with the times. We might as well require a man to wear the coat which fitted him when a boy, as civilized society to remain ever under the regime of their barbarous ancestors.

Because of the last sentence his idea might be interpreted to be a justification of the particular change in government he was championing against earlier institutions. But he goes on to say: "Each generation has a right to choose for itself the form of government it believes the most promotive of its own happiness." Hence he also said: "The idea that institutions established for the use of a nation cannot be touched or modified, even to make them answer their end . . . may perhaps be a salutary provision against the abuses of a monarch, but it is most absurd against the nation itself." "A generation holds all the rights and powers their predecessors once held and may change their laws and institutions to suit themselves." He engaged in certain calculations based on Buffon, more ingenious than convincing, to settle upon a period of eighteen years and eight months that fixed the natural span of the life of a generation; thereby indicating the frequency with which it is desirable to overhaul "laws and institutions" to bring them into accord with "new discoveries, new truths, change of manners and opinions." The word *culture* is not used; Jefferson's statement would have been weakened by its use. But it is not only professed followers of Jefferson who

have failed to act upon his teaching. It is true of all of us so far as we have set undue store by established mechanisms. The most flagrantly obvious violation of Jefferson's democratic point of view is found in the idolatry of the Constitution as it stands that has been sedulously cultivated. But it goes beyond this instance. As believers in democracy we have not only the right but the duty to question existing mechanisms of, say, suffrage and to inquire whether some functional organization would not serve to formulate and manifest public opinion better than the existing methods. It is not irrelevant to the point that a score of passages could be cited in which Jefferson refers to the American Government as an *experiment*.

The second point of which I would speak is closely bound up with an issue which has become controversial and partisan, namely, states rights versus federal power. There is no question of where Jefferson stood on that issue, nor as to his fear in general of governmental encroachment on liberty—inevitable in his case, since it was the cause of the Rebellion against British domination and was also the ground of his struggle against Hamiltonianism. But any one who stops with this particular aspect of Jefferson's doctrine misses an underlying principle of utmost importance. For while he stood for state action as a barrier against excessive power at Washington, and while on the *practical side* his concern with it was most direct, in his theoretical writings chief importance is attached to local self-governing units on something like the New England town-meeting plan. His project for general political organization on the basis of small units, small enough so that all its members could have direct communication with one another and take care of all community affairs was never acted upon. It never received much attention in the press of immediate practical problems.

But without forcing the significance of this plan, we may find in it an indication of one of the most serious of present problems regarding democracy. . . . [Individuals] at present find themselves in the grip of immense forces whose workings and consequences they have no power of affecting. The situation calls emphatic attention to the need for face-to-face associations, whose interactions with one another may offset if not control the dread impersonality of the sweep of present forces. There is a difference between a society, in a sense of an association, and a community. Electrons, atoms and molecules are in association with one another. Nothing exists in isolation anywhere through nature. Natural associations are conditions for the existence of a community, but a community adds the function of communication in which emotions and ideas are shared as well as joint undertakings engaged in. Economic forces have immensely widened the scope of associa-

tional activities. But it has done so largely at the expense of the intimacy and directness of communal group interests and activities. The American habit of "joining" is a tribute to the reality of the problem but has not gone far in solving it. The power of the rabblouser, especially in the totalitarian direction, is mainly due to his power to create a factitious sense of direct union and communal solidarity—if only by arousing the emotion of common intolerance and hate.

I venture to quote words written some years ago:

Evils which are uncritically and indiscriminately laid at the door of industrialism and democracy might, with greater intelligence, be referred to the dislocation, and unsettlement of local communities. Vital and thorough attachments are bred only in the intimacy of an intercourse which is of necessity restricted in range. . . . Is it possible to restore the reality of the less communal organizations and to penetrate and saturate their members with a sense of local community life? . . . Democracy must begin at home, and its home is the neighborly community.

On account of the vast extension of the field of association, production by elimination of distance and lengthening of temporal spans, it is obvious that social agencies, political and non-political, cannot be confined to localities. But the problem of harmonious adjustment between extensive activities, precluding direct contacts, and the intensive activities of community intercourse is a pressing one for democracy. It involves even more than apprenticeship in the practical processes of self-government, important as that is, which Jefferson had in mind. It involves development of local agencies of communication and cooperation, creating stable loyal attachments, to militate against the centrifugal forces of present culture, while at the same time they are of a kind to respond flexibly to the demands of the larger unseen and indefinite public. To a very considerable extent, groups having a functional basis will probably have to replace those based on physical contiguity. In the family both factors combine.

The third point of which I would make express mention as to Jefferson and democracy has to do with his ideas about property. It would be absurd to hold that his personal views were "radical" beyond fear of concentrated wealth and a positive desire for general distribution of wealth without great extremes in either direction. However, it is sometimes suggested that his phrase "pursuit of happiness" stood for economic activity, so that life, liberty, and property were the rights he thought organized society should maintain. But just here is where he broke most completely with Locke. In connection with property, especially property in land, he makes his most positive statements about the inability of any generation to bind its successors. Jeffer-

son held that property rights are created by the "social pact" instead of representing inherent individual moral claims which government is morally bound to maintain.

The right to pursue happiness stood with Jefferson for nothing less than the claim of every human being to choose his own career and to act upon his own choice and judgment free from restraints and constraints imposed by the arbitrary will of other human beings—whether these others are officials of government, of whom Jefferson was especially afraid, or are persons whose command of capital and control of the opportunities for engaging in useful work limits the ability of others to "pursue happiness." The Jeffersonian principle of equality of rights without special favor to any one justifies giving supremacy to personal rights when they come into conflict with property rights. While his views are properly enough cited against ill-considered attacks upon the economic relations that exist at a given time, it is sheer perversion to hold that there is anything in Jeffersonian democracy that forbids political action to bring about equalization of economic conditions in order that the equal right of all to free choice and free action be maintained.

I have referred with some particularity to Jefferson's ideas upon special points because of the proof they afford that the source of the American democratic tradition is moral—not technical, abstract, narrowly political nor materially utilitarian. It is moral because based on faith in the ability of human nature to achieve freedom for individuals accompanied with respect and regard for other persons and with social stability built on cohesion instead of coercion. Since the tradition is a moral one, attacks upon it, however they are made, wherever they come from, from within or from without, involve moral issues and can be settled only upon moral grounds. In as far as the democratic ideal has undergone eclipse among us, the obscuration is moral in source and effect. The dimming is both a product and a manifestation of the confusion that accompanies transition from an old order to a new one for the arrival of the latter was heralded only as conditions plunged it into an economic regime so novel that there was no adequate preparation for it and which dislocated the established relations of persons with one another.

Nothing is gained by attempts to minimize the novelty of the democratic order, nor the scope of the change it requires in old and long cherished traditions. We have not even as yet a common and accepted vocabulary in which to set forth the order of moral values involved in realization of democracy. The language of Natural Law was once all but universal in educated Christendom. The conditions which gave it force disappeared. Then there



was an appeal to natural rights, supposed by some to center in isolated individuals—although not in the original American formulation. At present, appeal to the individual is dulled by our inability to locate the individual with any assurance. While we are compelled to note that his freedom can be maintained only through the working together toward a single end of a large number of different and complex factors, we do not know how to co-ordinate them on the basis of voluntary purpose.

The intimate association that was held to exist between individualism and business activity for private profit gave, on one side, a distorted meaning to individualism. Then the weakening, even among persons who nominally retain older theological beliefs, of the imaginative ideas and emotions connected with the sanctity of the individual, disturbed democratic individualism on the positive moral side. The moving energy once associated with things called spiritual has lessened; we use the word *ideal* reluctantly, and have difficulty in giving the word *moral* much force beyond, say, a limited field of mutually kindly relations among individuals. That such a syllogism as the following once had a vital meaning to a man of affairs like Jefferson today seems almost incredible: "Man was created for social intercourse, but social intercourse cannot be maintained without a sense of justice; then man must have been created with a sense of justice."

Even if we have an abiding faith in democracy, we are not likely to express it as Jefferson expressed his faith: "I have no fear but that the result of our experiment will be that men may be trusted to govern themselves without a master. Could the contrary of this be proved, I should conclude either there is no God or that he is a malevolent being." The belief of Jefferson that the sole legitimate object of government among men "is to secure the greatest degree of happiness possible to the general mass of those associated under it" was connected with his belief that Nature—or God—benevolent in intent, had created men for happiness on condition they attained knowledge of natural order and observed the demands of that knowledge in their actions. The obsolescence of the language for many persons makes it the more imperative for all who would maintain and advance the ideals of democracy to face the issue of the moral ground of political institutions and the moral principles by which men acting together may attain freedom of individuals which will amount to fraternal associations with one another. The weaker our faith in Nature, in its laws and rights and its benevolent intentions for human welfare, the more urgent is the need for a faith based on ideas that are now intellectually credible and that are consonant with present economic

conditions, which will inspire and direct action with something of the ardor once attached to things religious.

Human power over the physical energies of nature has immensely increased. In moral ideal, power of man over physical nature should be employed to reduce, to eliminate progressively, the power of man over man. By what means shall we prevent its use to effect new, more subtle, more powerful agencies of subjection of men to other men? Both the issue of war or peace between nations, and the future of economic relations for years and generations to come in contribution either to human freedom or human subjection are involved. An increase of power undreamed of a century ago, one to whose further increase no limits can be put as long as scientific inquiry goes on, is an established fact. The thing still uncertain is what we are going to do with it. That it is power signifies of itself it is electrical, thermic, chemical. What will be done with it is a moral issue.

Physical interdependence has increased beyond anything that could have been foreseen. Division of labor in industry was anticipated and was looked forward to with satisfaction. But it is relatively the least weighty phase of the present situation. The career of individuals, their lives and security as well as prosperity is now affected by events on the other side of the world. The forces back of these events he cannot touch or influence—save perhaps by joining in a war of nations against nations. For we seem to live in a world in which nations try to deal with the problems created by the new situation by drawing more and more into themselves, by more and more extreme assertions of independent nationalist sovereignty, while everything they do in the direction of autarchy leads to ever closer mixture with other nations—but in war.

War under existing conditions compels nations, even those professedly the most democratic, to turn authoritarian and totalitarian as the World War of 1914-18 resulted in Fascist totalitarianism in non-democratic Italy and Germany and in Bolshevik totalitarianism in non-democratic Russia, and promoted political, economic and intellectual reaction in this country. The necessity of transforming physical interdependence into moral—into human—interdependence is part of the democratic problem: and yet war is said even now to be the path of salvation for democratic countries!

Individuals can find the security and protection that are prerequisites for freedom only in association with others—and then the organization these associations take on, as a measure of securing their efficiency, limits the freedom of those who have entered into them. The importance of organization

has increased so much in the last hundred years that the word is now quite commonly used as a synonym for association and society. Since at the very best organization is but the mechanism through which association operates, the identification is evidence of the extent in which a servant has become a master; in which means have usurped the place of the end for which they are called into existence. The predicament is that individuality demands association to develop and sustain it and association requires arrangement and coordination of its elements, or organization—since otherwise it is formless and void of power. But we have now a kind of molluscan organization, soft individuals within and a hard constrictive shell without. Individuals voluntarily enter associations which have become practically nothing but organizations; and then conditions under which they act take control of what they do whether they want it or not.

Persons acutely aware of the dangers of regimentation when it is imposed by government remain oblivious of the millions of persons whose behavior is regimented by an economic system through whose intervention alone they obtain a livelihood. The contradiction is the more striking because the new organizations were for the most part created in the name of freedom, and, at least at the outset, by exercise of voluntary choice. But the kind of working-together which has resulted is too much like that of the parts of a machine to represent a cooperation which expresses freedom and also contributes to it. No small part of the democratic problem is to achieve associations whose ordering of parts provides the strength that comes from stability, while they promote flexibility of response to change.

Lastly, in this brief survey, there is the problem of the relation of human nature and physical nature. The ancient world solved the problem, in abstract philosophical theory, by endowing all nature, in its cosmic scope, with the moral qualities of the highest and most ideal worth in humanity. The theology and rites of the Church gave this abstract theory a direct significance in the lives of the peoples of the western world. For it provided practical agencies by means of which the operation of the power creating and maintaining the universe were supposed to come to the support of individuals in this world and the next. The rise of physical science rendered an ever increasing number of men skeptical of the intellectual foundation provided by the old theory. The unsettlement, going by the name of the conflict of science and religion, proves the existence of the division in the foundations upon which our culture rests, between ideas in the form of knowledge and ideas that are emotional and imaginative and that directly actuate conduct.

This disturbance on the moral side has been enormously aggravated by those who are remote from the unsettlement due to intellectual causes. It comes home to everyone by the effects of the practical application of the new physical science. For all the physical features of the present regime of production and distribution of goods and services are products of the new physical science, while the distinctively *human* consequences of science are still determined by habits and beliefs established before its origin. That democracy should not as yet have succeeded in healing the breach is no cause for discouragement: provided there is effected a union of human possibilities and ideals with the spirit and methods of science on one side and with the workings of the economic system on the other side. For a considerable period laissez-faire individualism prevented the problem from being even seen. It treated the new economic movement as if it were simply an expression of forces that were fundamental in the human constitution but were only recently released for free operation. It failed to see that the great expansion which was occurring was in fact due to release of *physical* energies; that as far as human action and human freedom is concerned, a problem, not a solution, was thereby instituted: the problem, namely, of management and direction of the new physical energies so they would contribute to realization of human possibilities.

The reaction that was created by the inevitable collapse of a movement that failed so disastrously in grasp of the problem has had diverse results, the diversity of which is part of the present confused state of our lives. Production of the material means of a secure and free life has been indefinitely increased and at an accelerated rate. It is not surprising that there is a large group which attributes the gains which have accrued, actually and potentially, to the economic regime under which they have occurred—instead of to the scientific knowledge which is the source of physical control of natural energies. The group is large. It is composed not only of the immediate beneficiaries of the system but also of the much larger number who hope that they, or at least their children, are to have full share in its benefits. Because of the opportunities furnished by free land, large unused natural resources and the absence of fixed class differences (which survive in European countries in spite of legal abolition of feudalism), this group is particularly large in this country. It is represented by those who point to the higher standard of living in this country and by those who have responded to the greater opportunities for advancement this country has afforded to them. In short, this group, in both categories of its constituents, is impressed by actual gains



that have come about. They have a kind of blind and touching faith that improvement is going to continue in some more or less automatic way until it includes them and their offspring.

Then there is a much smaller group who are as sensitive, perhaps more so, to the immense possibilities represented by the physical means now potentially at our command, but who are acutely aware of our failure to realize them; who see instead the miseries, cruelties, oppressions and frustrations which exist. The weakness of this group has been that it has also failed to realize the involvement of the new scientific method in producing the existing state of affairs, and the need for its further extensive and unremitting application to determine analytically—in detail—the causes of present ills, and to project means for their elimination. In social affairs, the wholesale mental attitude that has been referred to persists with little change. It leads to formation of ambitious and sweeping beliefs and policies. The human *ideal* is indeed comprehensive. As a standpoint from which to view existing conditions and judge the direction change should take, it cannot be too inclusive. But the problem of production of change is one of infinite attention to means; and means can be determined only by definite analysis of the conditions of each problem as it presents itself. Health is a comprehensive, a “sweeping” ideal. But progress toward it has been made in the degree in which recourse to panaceas has been abandoned and inquiry has been directed to determinate disturbances and means for dealing with them. The group is represented at its extreme by those who believe there is a necessary historical law which governs the course of events so that all that is needed is deliberate acting in accord with it. The law by which class conflict produces by its own dialectic its complete opposite becomes then the supreme and sole regulator for determining policies and methods of action.

That more adequate knowledge of human nature is demanded if the release of physical powers is to serve human ends is undeniable. But it is a mistake to suppose that this knowledge of itself enables us to control human energies as physical science has enabled us to control physical energies. It suffers from the fallacy into which those have fallen who have supposed that physical energies put at our disposal by science are sure to produce human progress and prosperity. A more adequate science of human nature might conceivably only multiply the agencies by which some human beings manipulate other human beings for their own advantage. Failure to take account of the moral phase of the problem, the question of values and ends, marks, although from the opposite pole, a relapse into the fallacy of the theorists of a century ago who assumed that “free”—that is to say, politically

unrestrained—manifestation of human wants and impulses would tend to bring about social prosperity, progress, and harmony. It is a counterpart fallacy to the Marxist notion that there is an economic or “materialistic,” dialectic of history by which a certain desirable (and in that sense moral) end will be brought about with no intervention of choice of values and effort to realize them. As I wrote some years ago, “the assimilation of human science to physical science represents only another form of absolutistic logic, a kind of physical absolutism.”

Social events will continue, in any case, to be products of interaction of human nature with cultural conditions. Hence the primary and fundamental question will always be what sort of social results we supremely want. Improved science of human nature would put at our disposal means, now lacking, for defining the problem and working effectively for its solution. But save as it should reinforce respect for the morale of science, and thereby extend and deepen the incorporation of the attitudes which form the method of science into the disposition of individuals, it might add a complication similar to that introduced by improved physical science. Anything that obscures the fundamentally moral nature of the social problem is harmful, no matter whether it proceeds from the side of physical or of psychological theory. Any doctrine that eliminates or even obscures the function of choice of values and enlistment of desires and emotions in behalf of those chosen weakens personal responsibility for judgment and for action. It thus helps create the attitudes that welcome and support the totalitarian state.

I have stated in bare outline some of the outstanding phases of the problem of culture in the service of democratic freedom. Difficulties and obstacles have been emphasized. This emphasis is a result of the fact that a *problem* is presented. Emphasis upon the problem is due to belief that many weaknesses which events have disclosed are connected with failure to see the immensity of the task involved in setting mankind upon the democratic road. That with a background of millennia of non-democratic societies behind them, the earlier advocates of democracy tremendously simplified the issue is natural. For a time the simplification was an undoubted asset. Too long continued it became a liability.

Recognition of the scope and depth of the problem is neither depressing nor discouraging when the democratic movement is placed in historic perspective. The ideas by which it formulated itself have a long history behind them. We can trace their source in Hellenic humanism and in Christian beliefs; and we can also find recurrent efforts to realize this or that special aspect of these ideas in some special struggle against a particular form of

oppression. By proper selection and arrangement, we can even make out a case for the idea that all past history has been a movement, at first unconscious and then conscious, to attain freedom. A more sober view of history discloses that it took a very fortunate conjunction of events to bring about the rapid spread and seemingly complete victory of democracy during the nineteenth century. The conclusion to be drawn is not the depressing one that it is now in danger of destruction because of an unfavorable conjunction of events. The conclusion is that what was won in a more or less external and accidental manner must now be achieved and sustained by deliberate and intelligent endeavor.

The contrast thus suggested calls attention to the fact that underlying persistent attitudes of human beings were formed by traditions, customs, institutions, which existed when there was no democracy—when in fact democratic ideas and aspirations tended to be strangled at birth. Persistence of these basic dispositions accounts, on one side, for the sudden attack upon democracy; it is a reversion to old emotional and intellectual habits; or rather it is not so much a reversion as it is a manifestation of attitudes that have been there all the time but have been more or less covered up. Their persistence also explains the depth and range of the present problem. The struggle for democracy has to be maintained on as many fronts as culture has aspects: political, economic, international, educational, scientific and artistic, religious. The fact that we now have to accomplish of set purpose what in an earlier period was more or less a gift of grace renders the problem a moral one to be worked out on moral grounds.

Part of the fortunate conjunction of circumstances with respect to us who live here in the United States consists . . . of the fact that our forefathers found themselves in a new land. The shock of physical dislocation effected a very considerable modification of old attitudes. Habits of thought and feeling which were the products of long centuries of acculturation were loosened. Less entrenched dispositions dropped off. The task of forming new institutions was thereby rendered immensely easier. The readjustment thus effected has been a chief factor in creating a general attitude of adaptability that has enabled us, save for the Civil War, to meet change with a minimum of external conflict and, in spite of an heritage of violence, with good nature. It is because of such consequences that the geographical New World may become a New World in a human sense. But, all the more on this account, the situation is such that most of the things about which we have been complacent and self-congratulatory now have to be won by thought and effort, instead of being results of evolution of a manifest destiny.

In the present state of affairs, a conflict of the moral Old and New Worlds is the essence of the struggle for democracy. It is not a question for us of isolationism, although the physical factors which make possible physical isolation from the warring ambitions of Europe are a factor to be cherished in an emergency. The conflict is not one waged with arms, although the question whether we again take up arms on European battlefields for ends that are foreign to the ends to which this country is dedicated will have weight in deciding whether we win or lose our own battle on our own ground. It is possible to stay out for reasons that have nothing to do with the maintenance of democracy, and a good deal to do with pecuniary profit, just as it is possible to be deluded into participation in the name of fighting for democracy.

The conflict as it concerns the democracy to which our history commits us is *within* our own institutions and attitudes. It can be won only by extending the application of democratic methods, methods of consultation, persuasion, negotiation, communication, cooperative intelligence, in the task of making our own politics, industry, education, our culture generally, a servant and an evolving manifestation of democratic ideas. Resort to military force is a first sure sign that we are giving up the struggle for the democratic way of life, and that the Old World has conquered morally as well as geographically—succeeding in imposing upon us its ideals and methods.

If there is one conclusion to which human experience unmistakably points it is that democratic ends demand democratic methods for their realization. Authoritarian methods now offer themselves to us in new guises. They come to us claiming to serve the ultimate ends of freedom and equity in a classless society. Or they recommend adoption of a totalitarian regime in order to fight totalitarianism. In whatever form they offer themselves, they owe their seductive power to their claim to serve ideal ends. Our first defense is to realize that democracy can be served only by the slow day by day adoption and contagious diffusion in every phase of our common life of methods that are identical with the ends to be reached and that recourse to monistic, wholesale, absolutist procedures is a betrayal of human freedom no matter in what guise it presents itself. An American democracy can serve the world only as it demonstrates in the conduct of its own life the efficacy of plural, partial, and experimental methods in securing and maintaining an ever-increasing release of the powers of human nature, in service of a freedom which is cooperative and a cooperation which is voluntary.

We have no right to appeal to time to justify complacency about the ultimate result. We have every right to point to the long non-democratic and



anti-democratic course of human history and to the recentness of democracy in order to enforce the immensity of the task confronting us. The very novelty of the experiment explains the impossibility of restricting the problem to any one element, aspect, or phase of our common everyday life. We have every right to appeal to the long and slow process of time to protect ourselves from the pessimism that comes from taking a short-span temporal view of events—under one condition. We must know that the dependence of ends upon means is such that the only *ultimate* result is the result that is attained today, tomorrow, the next day, and day after day, in the succession of years and generations. Only thus can we be sure that we face our problems in detail one by one as they arise, with all the resources provided by collective intelligence operating in cooperative action. At the end as at the beginning the democratic method is as fundamentally simple and as immensely difficult as is the energetic, unflagging, unceasing creation of an ever-present new road upon which we can walk together.

THE ANATOMY OF SOCIETY:  
COMMUNITY AND POLITY

5. INHERENT COMPLEXITIES OF  
CONTEMPORARY DEMOCRACY



## E. H. CARR

IN the spring of 1951, Edward Hallet Carr (b. 1892), English historian and student of international affairs, delivered a series of lectures on the British Broadcasting System's "Third Programme." In these talks, Carr distilled and summarized many of the doubts about, and difficulties with, the theory and practice of democracy in modern, "mass" civilization. In his view, the main problem of contemporary political organization is to adapt the traditional democratic conceptions of individualism, optimism, and rationality to the alien conditions of the industrialized, and urbanized, "new society" of the twentieth century. The following selection has been taken from the published collection of the original lectures, entitled *The New Society* (1951). Formerly an official of the Foreign Office, a professor at the University College of Wales at Aberystwyth, and an editor of the London *Times*, Carr has been a prolific writer. Among his most important books are *The Twenty Years Crisis* (1939) and *The Soviet Impact on the Western World* (1946).



### THE NEW SOCIETY

#### CHAPTER IV: FROM INDIVIDUALISM TO MASS DEMOCRACY

The problem of political organization in the new society is to adapt to the mass civilization of the twentieth century conceptions of democracy formed in earlier and highly individualistic periods of history. The proclamation by the French revolution of popular sovereignty was a serious challenge to institutions which had grown up under quite different auspices and influences. It is no accident that Athenian democracy, which has been commonly regarded as the source and exemplar of democratic institutions, was the creation and prerogative of a limited and privileged group of the population. It is no accident that Locke, the founder of the modern democratic tradition, was the chosen philosopher and prophet of the eighteenth-century English Whig oligarchy. It is no accident that the magnificent structure of British nineteenth-century liberal democracy was built up on a highly restrictive property franchise. History points unmistakably to the fact that political

---

This selection has been reprinted from E. H. Carr, *The New Society* (pp. 61-79, Copyright 1951 by Macmillan and Company, Ltd., London) by permission of St. Martin's Press, Inc., New York.



democracy, in the forms in which it has hitherto been known, flourishes best where some of the people, but not all the people, are free and equal; and, since this conclusion is incompatible with the conditions of the new society and repugnant to the contemporary conscience, the task of saving democracy in our time is the task of reconciling it with the postulate of popular sovereignty and mass civilization.

Modern democracy, as it grew up and spread from its focus in western Europe over the past three centuries, rested on three main propositions: first, that the individual conscience is the ultimate source of decisions about what is right and wrong; second, that there exists between different individuals a fundamental harmony of interest strong enough to enable them to live peacefully together in society; third, that where action has to be taken in the name of society, rational discussion between individuals is the best method of reaching a decision on that action. Modern democracy is, in virtue of its origins, individualist, optimistic and rational. The three main propositions on which it is based have all been seriously challenged in the contemporary world.

In the first place, the individualist conception of democracy rests on a belief in the inherent rights of individuals based on natural law. According to this conception, the function of democratic government is not to create or innovate, but to interpret and apply rights which already exist. This accounts for the importance attached in the democratic tradition to the rights of minorities within the citizen body. Decision by majority vote might be a necessary and convenient device. But individuals belonging to the minority had the same inherent rights as those belonging to the majority. Insistence on the rule of law, preferably inscribed in a written and permanent constitution, was an important part of the individualist tradition of democracy. The individual enjoyed certain indefeasible rights against the society of which he was a member; these rights were often regarded as deriving from a real or hypothetical "social contract" which formed the title-deeds of society. Just as the individualist tradition in *laissez-faire* economics was hostile to all forms of combination, so the individualist tradition in politics was inimical to the idea of political parties. Both in Athenian democracy and in eighteenth-century Britain, parties were regarded with mistrust and denounced as "factions."

The French revolution with its announcement of the sovereignty of the people made the first serious assault on this view of democracy. The individualism of Locke's "natural law" was replaced by the collectivism of Rousseau's "general will." Both Pericles and Locke had thought in terms

of a small and select society of privileged citizens. Rousseau for the first time thought in terms of the sovereignty of the whole people, and faced the issue of mass democracy. He did so reluctantly; for he himself preferred the tiny community where direct democracy, without representation or delegation of powers, was still possible. But he recognized that the large nation had come to stay, and held that in such conditions the people could be sovereign only if it imposed on itself the discipline of a "general will." The practical conclusion drawn from this doctrine, not by Rousseau himself, but by the Jacobins, was the foundation of a single political party to embody the general will. Its logical conclusions were still more far-reaching. The individual, far from enjoying rights against society assured to him by natural law, had no appeal against the deliverances of the general will. The general will was the repository of virtue and justice, the state its instrument for putting them into effect. The individual who dissented from the general will cut himself off from the community and was a self-proclaimed traitor to it. Rousseau's doctrine led directly to the Jacobin practice of revolutionary terror. It would be idle to embark on a theoretical discussion of the rival merits of the two conceptions of democracy. Individualism is an oligarchic doctrine—the doctrine of the select and enterprising few who refuse to be merged in the mass. The function of natural law in modern history, though it is susceptible of other interpretations, has been to sanctify existing rights and to brand as immoral attempts to overthrow them. A conception based on individual rights rooted in natural law was a natural product of the oligarchic and conservative eighteenth century. It was equally natural that this conception should be challenged and overthrown in the ferment of a revolution that proclaimed the supremacy of popular sovereignty.

While, however, the beginnings of mass democracy can be discerned in the doctrines of Rousseau and in the practice of the French revolution, the problem in its modern form was a product of the nineteenth century. The Industrial revolution started its career under the banner of individual enterprise. Adam Smith was as straightforward an example as could be desired of eighteenth-century individualism. But presently the machine overtook the man, and the competitive advantages of mass production ushered in the age of standardization and larger and larger economic units. And with the mammoth trust and the mammoth trade union came the mammoth organ of opinion, the mammoth political party and, floating above them all, the mammoth state, narrowing still further the field of responsibility and action left to the individual and setting the stage for the new mass society. It was the English Utilitarians who, by rejecting natural law, turned their backs

on the individualist tradition and, by postulating the greatest good and the greatest number as the supreme goal, laid the theoretical foundation of mass democracy in Britain; in practice, they were also the first radical reformers. Before long, thinkers began to explore some of the awkward potentialities of mass democracy. The danger of the oppression of minorities by the majority was the most obvious. This was discerned by Tocqueville in the United States in the 1830's and by J. S. Mill in England twenty-five years later. In our own time the danger has reappeared in a more insidious form. Soviet Russia has a form of government which describes itself as a democracy. It claims, not without some historical justification, to stem from the Jacobins who stemmed from Rousseau and the doctrine of the general will. The general will is an orthodoxy which purports to express the common opinion; the minority which dissents can legitimately be suppressed. But we are not concerned here with the abuses and excesses of the Soviet form of government. What troubles us is the question how far, in moving from the individualism of restrictive liberal democracy to the mass civilization of today, we have ourselves become involved in a conception of democracy which postulates a general will. The question is all around us today not only in the form of loyalty tests, avowed or secret, or committees on un-American activities, but also in the form of the closed shop and of increasingly rigid standards of party discipline. . . . We have moved far from the conception of truth emerging from the interplay of divergent individual opinions. Loyalty has come to mean the submission of the individual to the general will of the party or group.

The second postulate of Locke's conception of society, the belief in a fundamental harmony of interests between individuals, equally failed to stand the test of time, and for much the same reason. Even more than natural law, the harmony of interests was essentially a conservative doctrine. If the interest of the individual rightly understood coincided with the interest of the whole society, it followed that any individual who assailed the existing order was acting against his own true interests and could be condemned not only as wicked, but as short-sighted and foolish. Some such argument was, for instance, often invoked against strikers who failed to recognize the common interest uniting them with their employers. The French revolution, an act of self-assertion by the third estate against the two senior estates of nobility and clergy, demonstrated—like any other violent upheaval—the hollowness of the harmony of interests; and the doctrine was soon also to be powerfully challenged on the theoretical plane.

The challenge came from two quarters. The Utilitarians, while not mak-

ing a frontal attack on the doctrine, implicitly denied it when they asserted that the harmony of interests had to be created by remedial action before it would work. They saw that some of the worst existing inequalities would have to be reformed out of existence before it was possible to speak without irony of a society based on a harmony of interests; and they believed in increased education, and the true liberty of thought which would result from it, as a necessary preparation for establishing harmony. Then Marx and Engels in the *Communist Manifesto* took the class struggle and made out of it a theory of history which, partial though it was, stood nearer to current reality than the theory of the harmony of interests had ever done. Social and economic pressures resulting from the breakdown of *laissez-faire* illustrated in practice what Marx had demonstrated in theory. But in Great Britain it was reformist Utilitarianism rather than revolutionary Marxism that set the pace. The flagrant absence of a harmony of interests between competing and conflicting classes more and more urgently called for state intervention. The state could no longer be content to hold the ring; it must descend actively into the arena to create a harmony which did not exist in nature. Legislation, hitherto regarded as an exceptional function required from time to time to clear up some misunderstanding or to rectify some abuse, now became normal and continuous. It no longer sufficed to interpret and apply rights conferred on the individual by the laws of nature. What was expected of the state was positive and continuous activity—a form of social and economic engineering. The substitution of a planned economy for *laissez-faire* capitalism brought about a radical transformation in the attitude towards the state. The functions of the state were no longer merely supervisory, but creative and remedial. It was no longer an organ whose weakness was its virtue and whose activities should be restricted to a minimum in the interests of freedom. It was an organ which one sought to capture and control for the carrying out of necessary reforms; and, having captured it, one sought to make it as powerful and effective as possible in order to carry them out. The twentieth century has not only replaced individualist democracy by mass democracy, but has substituted the cult of the strong remedial state for the doctrine of the natural harmony of interests.

The third main characteristic of Locke's conception of society—a characteristic which helped to give the eighteenth century its nicknames of the Age of Reason or the Age of Enlightenment—was its faith in rational discussion as a guide to political action. This faith provided the most popular nineteenth-century justification of the rule of the majority as the basis of democracy. Since men were on the whole rational, and since the right



answer to any given issue could be discovered by reason, one was more likely, in the case of dispute, to find right judgment on the side of the majority than on the side of the minority. Like other eighteenth-century conceptions, the doctrine of reason in politics was the doctrine of a ruling oligarchy. The rational approach to politics, which encouraged leisurely argument and eschewed passion, was eminently the approach of a well-to-do, leisured and cultured class. Its efficacy could be most clearly and certainly guaranteed when the citizen body consisted of a relatively small number of educated persons who could be trusted to reason intelligently and dispassionately on controversial issues submitted to them. The prominent rôle assigned to reason in the original democratic scheme provides perhaps the most convincing explanation why democracy has hitherto always seemed to flourish best with a restrictive franchise. Much has been written in recent years of the decline of reason, and of respect for reason, in human affairs, when sometimes what has really happened has been the abandonment of the highly simplified eighteenth-century view of reason in favour of a subtler and more sophisticated analysis. But it is none the less true that the epoch-making changes in our attitude towards reason provide a key to some of the profoundest problems of contemporary democracy.

First of all, the notion that men of intelligence and good will were likely by process of rational discussion to reach a correct opinion on controversial political questions could be valid only in an age when such questions were comparatively few and simple enough to be accessible to the educated layman. It implicitly denied that any specialized knowledge was required to solve political problems. This hypothesis was perhaps tenable so long as the state was not required to intervene in economic issues, and the questions on which decisions had to be taken turned on matters of practical detail or general political principles. In the first half of the twentieth century these conditions had everywhere ceased to exist. In Great Britain major issues of a highly controversial character like the return to the gold standard in 1925 or the acceptance of the American loan in 1946 were of a kind in which no opinion seriously counted except that of the trained expert in possession of a vast array of facts and figures, some of them probably not available to the public. In such matters the ordinary citizen could not even have an intelligent opinion on the question who were the best experts to consult. The only rôle he could hope to play was to exercise his hunch at the election by choosing the right leader to consult the right experts about vital, though probably still unformulated, issues of policy which would ultimately affect his daily life.

At this initial stage of the argument reason itself is not dethroned from its supreme rôle in the decision of political issues. The citizen is merely asked to surrender his right of decision to the superior reason of the expert. At the second stage of the argument reason itself is used to dethrone reason. The social psychologist, employing rational methods of investigation, discovers that men in the mass are often most effectively moved by non-rational emotions such as admiration, envy, hatred, and can be most effectively reached not by rational argument, but by emotional appeals to eye and ear, or by sheer repetition. Propaganda is as essential a function of mass democracy as advertising of mass production. The political organizer takes a leaf out of the book of the commercial advertiser and sells the leader or the candidate to the voter by the same methods used to sell patent medicines or refrigerators. The appeal is no longer to the reason of the citizen, but to his gullibility. A more recent phenomenon has been the emergence of what Max Weber called the "charismatic leader" as the expression of the general will. The retreat from individualism seemed to issue at last—and not alone in the so-called totalitarian countries—in the exaltation of a single individual leader who personified and resumed within himself the qualities and aspirations of the "little man," of the ordinary individual lost and bewildered in the new mass society. But the principal qualification of the leader is no longer his capacity to reason correctly on political or economic issues, or even his capacity to choose the best experts to reason for him, but a good public face, a convincing voice, a sympathetic fireside manner on the radio; and these qualities are deliberately built up for him by his publicity agents. In this picture of the techniques of contemporary democracy, the party headquarters, the directing brain at the centre, still operates rationally, but uses irrational rather than rational means to achieve its ends—means which are, moreover, not merely irrational but largely irrelevant to the purposes to be pursued or to the decisions to be taken.

The third stage of the argument reaches deeper levels. Hegel, drawing out the philosophical implications of Rousseau's doctrine, had identified the course of history with universal reason, to which the individual reason stood in the same relation as the individual will to Rousseau's general will. Individual reason had been the corner-stone of individualist democracy. Marx took Hegel's collective reason to make it the corner-stone of the new mass democracy. Marx purported to reject the metaphysical character of Hegel's thought. But, equally with Hegel, he conceived of history pursuing a rational course, which could be analysed and even predicted in terms of reason. Hegel had spoken of the cunning of reason in history, using individuals

to achieve purposes of which they themselves were unconscious. Marx would have rejected the turn of phrase as metaphysical. But his conception of history as a continuous process of class struggle contained elements of determinism which revealed its Hegelian ancestry, at any rate on one side. Marx remained a thorough-going rationalist. But the reason whose validity he accepted was collective rather than individual.

Marx played, however, a far more important part in what has been called "the flight from reason" than by the mere exaltation of the collective over the individual. By his vigorous assertion that "being determines consciousness, not consciousness being," that thinking is conditioned by the social environment of the thinker, and that ideas are the superstructure of a totality whose foundation is formed by the material conditions of life, Marx presented a clear challenge to what had hitherto been regarded as the sovereign or autonomous human reason. The actors who played significant parts in the historical drama were playing parts already written for them: this indeed was what made them significant. The function of individual reason was to identify itself with the universal reason which determined the course of history and to make itself the agent and executor of this universal reason. Some such view is indeed involved in any attempt to trace back historical events to underlying social causes; and Marx—and still more Engels—hedged a little in later years about the rôle of the individual in history. But the extraordinary vigour and conviction with which he drove home his main argument, and the political theory which he founded on it, give him a leading place among those nineteenth-century thinkers who shattered the comfortable belief of the Age of Enlightenment in the decisive power of individual reason in shaping the course of history.

Marx's keenest polemics were those directed to prove the "conditioned" character of the thinking of his opponents and particularly of the capitalist ruling class of the most advanced countries of his day. If they thought as they did it was because, as members of a class, "being" determined their "consciousness," and their ideas necessarily lacked any independent objectivity and validity. Hegel, as a good conservative, had exempted the current reality of the Prussian state from the operation of the dialectic which had destroyed successively so many earlier historical forms. Marx, as a revolutionary, admitted no such absolute in the present, but only in the future. The proletariat, whose victory would automatically abolish classes, was alone the basis of absolute value; and collective proletarian thinking had thus an objectivity which was denied to the thinking of other classes. Marx's willingness, like that of Hegel, to admit an absolute as the culminating point

of his dialectical process was, however, an element of inconsistency in his system; and, just as Marx was far more concerned to dissect capitalism than to provide a blue-print for socialism, so his use of the dialectic to lay bare the conditioned thinking of his opponents lay far nearer to his heart, and was far more effective, than his enunciation of the objective and absolute values of the proletariat. Marx's writings gave a powerful impetus to all forms of relativism. It seemed less important, at a time when the proletarian revolution was as yet nowhere in sight, to note his admission of absolute truth as a prerogative of the proletariat. The proletariat was for Marx the collective repository of Rousseau's infallible general will.

Another thinker of the later nineteenth century also helped to mould the climate of political opinion. Like Darwin, Freud was a scientist without pretensions to be a philosopher or, still less, a political thinker. But in the flight from reason at the end of the nineteenth century, he played the same popular rôle as Darwin had played a generation earlier in the philosophy of *laissez-faire*. Freud demonstrated that the fundamental attitudes of human beings in action and thought are largely determined at levels beneath that of consciousness, and that the supposedly rational explanations of those attitudes which we offer to ourselves and others are artificial and erroneous "rationalizations" of processes which we have failed to understand. Reason is given to us, Freud seems to say, not to direct our thought and action, but to camouflage the hidden forces which do direct it. This is a still more devastating version of the Marxist thesis of substructure and superstructure. The substructure of reality resides in the unconscious: what appears above the surface is no more than the reflexion, seen in a distorting ideological mirror, of what goes on underneath. The political conclusion from all this—Freud himself drew none—is that any attempt to appeal to the reason of the ordinary man is waste of time, or is useful merely as camouflage to conceal the real nature of the process of persuasion; the appeal must be made to those subconscious strata which are decisive for thought and action. The debunking of ideology undertaken by the political science of Marx is repeated in a far more drastic and far-reaching way by the psychological science of Freud and his successors.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, therefore, the propositions of Locke on which the theory of liberal democracy were founded had all been subjected to fundamental attack, and the attack broadened and deepened as the century went on. Individualism began to give way to collectivism both in economic organization and in the forms and practice of mass democracy: the age of mass civilization had begun. The alleged harmony of



interests between individuals was replaced by the naked struggle between powerful classes and organized interest groups. The belief in the settlement of issues by rational discussion was undermined, first, by recognition of the complex and technical character of the issues involved, later and more seriously, by recognition that rational arguments were merely the conditioned reflexion of the class interests of those who put them forward, and, last and most seriously of all, by the discovery that the democratic voter, like other human beings, is most effectively reached not by arguments directed to his reason, but by appeals directed to his irrational, subconscious prejudices. The picture of democracy which emerged from these criticisms was the picture of an arena where powerful interest-groups struggled for the mastery. The leaders themselves were often the spokesmen and instruments of historical processes which they did not fully understand; their followers consisted of voters recruited and marshalled for purposes of which they were wholly unconscious by all the subtle techniques of modern psychological science and modern commercial advertising.

The picture is overdrawn. But we shall not begin to understand the problems of mass democracy unless we recognize the serious elements of truth in it, unless we recognize how far we have moved away from the conceptions and from the conditions out of which the democratic tradition was born. From the conception of democracy as a select society of free individuals, enjoying equal rights and periodically electing to manage the affairs of the society, a small number of their peers, who deliberate together and decide by rational argument on the course to pursue (the assumption being that the course which appeals to the majority is likely to be the most rational), we have passed to the current reality of mass democracy. The typical mass democracy of today is a vast society of individuals, stratified by widely different social and economic backgrounds into a series of groups or classes, enjoying equal political rights the exercise of which is organized through two or more closely integrated political machines called parties. Between the parties and individual citizens stand an indeterminate number of entities variously known as unions, associations, lobbies or pressure-groups devoted to the promotion of some economic interest, or of some social or humanitarian cause in which keen critics usually detect a latent and perhaps unconscious interest. At the first stage of the democratic process, these associations and groups form a sort of exchange and mart where votes are traded for support of particular policies; the more votes such a group controls the better its chance of having its views incorporated in the party platform. At the second stage, when these bargains have been made, the party as a united

entity "goes to the country" and endeavours by every form of political propaganda to win the support of the unattached voter. At the third stage, when the election has been decided, the parties once more dispute or bargain together, in the light of the votes cast, on the policies to be put into effect; the details of procedure at this third stage differ considerably in different democratic countries in accordance with varying constitutional requirements and party structures. What is important to note is that the first and third stages are fierce matters of bargaining. At the second stage, where the mass persuasion of the electorate is at issue, the methods employed now commonly approximate more and more closely to those of commercial advertisers, who, on the advice of modern psychologists, find the appeal to fear, envy or self-aggrandizement more effective than the appeal to reason. Certainly in the United States, where contemporary large-scale democracy has worked most successfully and where the strongest confidence is felt in its survival, experienced practitioners of politics would give little encouragement to the idea that rational argument exercises a major influence on the democratic process. We have returned to a barely disguised struggle of interest-groups in which the arguments used are for the most part no more than a rationalization of the interests concerned, and the rôle of persuasion is played by carefully calculated appeals to the irrational subconscious.

This discussion is intended to show not that mass democracy is more corrupt or less efficient than other forms of government (this I do not believe), but that mass democracy is a new phenomenon—a creation of the last half-century—which it is inappropriate and misleading to consider in terms of the philosophy of Locke or of the liberal democracy of the nineteenth century. It is new, because the new democratic society consists no longer of a homogeneous closed society of equal and economically secure individuals mutually recognizing one another's rights, but of ill co-ordinated, highly stratified masses of people of whom a large majority are primarily occupied with the daily struggle for existence. It is new, because the new democratic state can no longer be content to hold the ring in the strife of private economic interests, but must enter the arena at every moment and take the initiative in urgent issues of economic policy which affect the daily life of all the citizens, and especially of the least secure. It is new, because the old rationalist assumptions of Locke and of liberal democracy have broken down under the weight both of changed material conditions and of new scientific insights and inventions, and the leaders of the new democracy are concerned no longer primarily with the reflexion of opinion, but with the moulding and manipulation of opinion. To speak today of the defence of democracy

as if we were defending something which we knew and had possessed for many decades or many centuries is self-deception and sham.

It is no answer to point to institutions that have survived from earlier forms of democracy. The survival of kingship in Great Britain does not prove that the British system of government is a monarchy; and democratic institutions survive in many countries today—some survived even in Hitler's Germany—which have little or no claim to be called democracies. The criterion must be sought not in the survival of traditional institutions, but in the question where power resides and how it is exercised. In this respect democracy is a matter of degree. Some countries today are more democratic than others. But none is perhaps very democratic, if any high standard of democracy is applied. Mass democracy is a difficult and hitherto largely uncharted territory; and we should be nearer the mark, and should have a far more convincing slogan, if we spoke of the need, not to defend democracy, but to create it.

. . . [Two] of the basic problems which confront the new society [are] the problem of a planned economy and the problem of the right deployment and use of our human resources. These problems are basic in the sense that their solution is a condition of survival. The old methods of organizing production have collapsed, and society cannot exist without bringing new ones into operation. But those problems might conceivably be solved—are even, perhaps, in danger of being solved—by other than democratic means: here the task of mass democracy is to meet known and recognized needs by methods that are compatible with democracy, and to do it in time. The central problem . . . touches the essence of democracy itself. Large-scale political organizations show many of the characteristics of large-scale economic organizations, and have followed the same path of development. Mass democracy has, through its very nature, thrown up on all sides specialized groups of leaders—what are sometimes called *élites*. Everywhere, in government, in political parties, in trade unions, in co-operatives, these indispensable *élites* have taken shape with startling rapidity over the last thirty years. Everywhere the rift has widened between leaders and rank and file.

The rift takes two forms. In the first place, the interests of the leaders are no longer fully identical with those of the rank and file, since they include the special interest of the leaders in maintaining their own leadership—an interest which is no doubt rationalized, but not always justly, as constituting an interest of the whole group. The leaders, instead of remaining mere delegates of their equals, tend in virtue of their functions to become a separate professional, and then a separate social, group, forming

the nucleus of a new ruling class or, more insidiously still, being absorbed into the old ruling class. Secondly, and most important of all, there is an ever-increasing gap between the terms in which an issue is debated and solved among leaders and the terms in which the same issue is presented to the rank and file. Nobody supposes that the arguments which the leaders and managers of a political party or a trade union use among themselves in private conclave are the same as those which they present to a meeting of their members; and the methods of persuasion used from the public platform or over the radio will diverge more widely still. When the decision of substance has been taken by the leaders, whether of government, of party or of union, a further decision is often required on the best method of selling the decision. Broadly speaking, the rôle of reason varies inversely with the number of those to whom the argument is addressed. The decision of the leaders may be taken on rational grounds. But the motivation of the decision to the rank and file of the party or union, and still more to the general public, will contain a larger element of the irrational the larger the audience becomes. The spectacle of an efficient élite maintaining its authority and asserting its will over the mass by the rationally calculated use of irrational methods of persuasion is the most disturbing nightmare of mass democracy.

The problem defies any rough-and-ready answer. It was implicit in Lincoln's formula of government "of the people" (meaning, I take it, belonging to the people in the sense of popular sovereignty), "by the people" (implying, I think, direct participation in the business of government) and "for the people" (requiring an identity of interests between governors and governed only obtainable when such participation occurs). It was implicit in Lenin's much-derided demand that every cook should learn to govern and that every worker should take his turn at the work of administration. The building of nineteenth-century democracy was long and arduous. The building of the new mass democracy will be no easier. The historian can here only look back over the way we have come, and analyse the fundamental questions which are being presented to the coming generation. He may be able to throw some light on the nature of the answers that are required; but he cannot define or prescribe them.

For myself, it seems inconceivable that we can return to the individualist democracy of a privileged class; and, by the same token, we cannot return to the exclusively political democracy of the weak state exercising only police functions. We are committed to mass democracy, to egalitarian democracy, to the public control and planning of the economic process, and



therefore to the strong state exercising remedial and constructive functions. . . . I will say only that I have no faith in a flight into the irrational or in an exaltation of irrational values. Reason may be an imperfect instrument; and we can no longer take the simple view of its character and functions which satisfied the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. But it is none the less in a widening and deepening of the power of reason that we must place our hope. Mass democracy calls just as much as individualist democracy for an educated society as well as for responsible and courageous leaders; for it is only thus that the gap between leaders and masses, which is the major threat to mass democracy, can be bridged. The task is difficult but not hopeless; and just as Great Britain has done more than any other country during the last five years to mark out new lines of social and economic advance, so I believe that she has better opportunities than any other country to lay the foundations of an educated mass democracy.

## ROBERT MICHELS

EARLY in his life, Robert Michels was an active member of the German Social Democratic Party, a party dedicated to the creation of a true social, economic, and political democracy. In the management of its internal affairs, the party was also equally dedicated to the principles of democratic control. However, Michels's experience in the Party served to convince him that democracy, either as means or as end, was, under conditions of large-scale organization indispensable to industrial society, an impossibility. In an age of democratic optimism—prior to World War I—as yet unthreatened by the rise of dictatorships, Michels was led into a mood of political pessimism. To Michels all political movements, to be effective, must be organized; and in the conditions of modern society, organization necessarily entails bureaucracy and hierarchy. Such organization, no matter how democratically conceived, inevitably involves leadership, an élite, which controls the organization. The personnel of the leadership may change, but only to be replaced by new leaders.

The following selection has been taken from Michels's most famous book, *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy*, first published in German in 1911. The translation, made in 1915, is by Eden and Cedar Paul.



### POLITICAL PARTIES

#### Part I

##### CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTORY—THE NEED FOR ORGANIZATION

Democracy is inconceivable without organization. A few words will suffice to demonstrate this proposition.

A class which unfurls in face of society the banner of certain definite claims, and which aspires to be the realization of a complex of ideal aims deriving from the economic functions which that class fulfils, needs an organization. Be the claims economic or be they political, organization appears the only means for the creation of a collective will. Organization, based as it is upon the principle of least effort, that is to say, upon the greatest pos-

---

This selection has been reprinted from Robert Michels, *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy* (pp. 21-36, 39-40, 78-79, 102-106, 229-231, 389-392, 400-408, The Free Press, Glencoe, Ill., 1949) by permission of the publisher.

sible economy of energy, is the weapon of the weak in their struggle with the strong.

The chances of success in any struggle will depend upon the degree to which this struggle is carried out upon a basis of solidarity between individuals whose interests are identical. In objecting, therefore, to the theories of the individualist anarchists that nothing could please the employers better than the dispersion and disaggregation of the forces of the workers, the socialists, the most fanatical of all the partisans of the idea of organization, enunciate an argument which harmonizes well with the results of scientific study of the nature of parties.

We live in a time in which the idea of coöperation has become so firmly established that even millionaires perceive the necessity of common action. It is easy to understand, then, that organization has become a vital principle in the working class, for in default of it their success is *a priori* impossible. The refusal of the worker to participate in the collective life of his class cannot fail to entail disastrous consequences. In respect of culture and of economic, physical, and physiological conditions, the proletarian is the weakest element of our society. In fact, the isolated member of the working classes is defenceless in the hands of those who are economically stronger. It is only by combination to form a structural aggregate that the proletarians can acquire the faculty of political resistance and attain to a social dignity. The importance and the influence of the working class are directly proportional to its numerical strength. But for the representation of that numerical strength organization and coördination are indispensable. The principle of organization is an absolutely essential condition for the political struggle of the masses.

Yet this politically necessary principle of organization, while it overcomes that disorganization of forces which would be favourable to the adversary, brings other dangers in its train. We escape Scylla only to dash ourselves on Charybdis. Organization is, in fact, the source from which the conservative currents flow over the plain of democracy, occasioning there disastrous floods and rendering the plain unrecognizable.

#### CHAPTER II: MECHANICAL AND TECHNICAL IMPOSSIBILITY OF DIRECT GOVERNMENT BY THE MASSES

It was a Rhenish Democrat, Moritz Rittinghausen, who first made a brilliant attempt to give a real basis for direct legislation by the people.

According to this system the entire population was to be divided into sections, each containing a thousand inhabitants, as was done temporarily

for some days in Prussia during the elections of the years 1848 and 1849. The members of each section were to assemble in some pre-arranged place—a school, a town hall, or other public building—and to elect a president. Every citizen was to have the right of speech. In this way the intelligence of every individual would be placed at the service of the fatherland. When the discussion was finished, each one would record his vote. The president would transmit the result to the burgomaster, who would notify the higher authorities. The will of the majority would be decisive.

No legislative proposal was to come from above. The government should have no further initiative than to determine that on a given day all the sections should discuss a given argument. Whenever a certain number of the citizens demanded a new law of any kind, or the reform of an existing law, the ministry concerned must invite the people to exercise its sovereignty within a stated time, and to pass for itself the law in question. The law takes organic form from the discussion itself. First of all, the president opens the debate upon the principal question. Subsequently subordinate points are discussed. Then comes the vote. That proposition which has received the majority of votes is adopted. As soon as all the returns of the voting have been sent to the ministry, a special commission must edit a clear and simple text of the law, formulating it in a manner which is not open to different interpretations, as is the case with most of the laws presented to modern parliaments, for these, as Rittinghausen sarcastically adds, would seem to incorporate a deliberate intention to favour the tendency of lawyers to ambiguity and hair-splitting.

The system here sketched is clear and concise, and it might seem at the first glance that its practical application would involve no serious difficulties. But if put to the test it would fail to fulfil the expectations of its creator.

The practical ideal of democracy consists in the self-government of the masses in conformity with the decisions of popular assemblies. But while this system limits the extension of the principle of delegation, it fails to provide any guarantee against the formation of an oligarchical camarilla. Undoubtedly it deprives the natural leaders of their quality as functionaries, for this quality is transferred to the people themselves. The crowd, however, is always subject to suggestion, being readily influenced by the eloquence of great popular orators; moreover, direct government by the people, admitting no serious discussions or thoughtful deliberations, greatly facilitates *coups de main*<sup>1</sup> of all kinds of men who are exceptionally bold, energetic, and adroit.

It is easier to dominate a large crowd than a small audience. The adhesion

<sup>1</sup> [*Bold strokes.*]



of the crowd is tumultuous, summary, and unconditional. Once the suggestions have taken effect, the crowd does not readily tolerate contradiction from a small minority, and still less from isolated individuals. A great multitude assembled within a small area is unquestionably more accessible to panic alarms, to unreflective enthusiasm, and the like, than is a small meeting, whose members can quietly discuss matters among themselves.

It is a fact of everyday experience that enormous public meetings commonly carry resolutions by acclamation or by general assent, whilst these same assemblies, if divided into small sections, say of fifty persons each, would be much more guarded in their assent. Great party congresses, in which are present the *élite* of the membership, usually act in this way. Words and actions are far less deliberately weighed by the crowd than by the individuals or the little groups of which this crowd is composed. The fact is incontestable—a manifestation of the pathology of the crowd. The individual disappears in the multitude, and therewith disappears also personality and sense of responsibility.

The most formidable argument against the sovereignty of the masses is, however, derived from the mechanical and technical impossibility of its realization.

The sovereign masses are altogether incapable of undertaking the most necessary resolutions. The impotence of direct democracy, like the power of indirect democracy, is a direct outcome of the influence of number. In a polemic against Proudhon (1849), Louis Blanc asks whether it is possible for thirty-four millions of human beings (the population of France at that time) to carry on their affairs without accepting what the pettiest man of business finds necessary, the intermediation of representatives. He answers his own question by saying that one who declares direct action on this scale to be possible is a fool, and that one who denies its possibility need not be an absolute opponent of the idea of the state. The same question and the same answer could be repeated to-day in respect of party organization. Above all in the great industrial centres, where the labour party sometimes numbers its adherents by tens of thousands, it is impossible to carry on the affairs of this gigantic body without a system of representation. The great socialist organization of Berlin, which embraces the six constituencies of the city, as well as the two outlying areas of Niederbarnim and Teltow-Beeskow-Charlottenburg, has a member-roll of more than ninety thousand.

It is obvious that such a gigantic number of persons belonging to a unitary organization cannot do any practical work upon a system of direct discussion. The regular holding of deliberative assemblies of a thousand members

encounters the gravest difficulties in respect of room and distance; while from the topographical point of view such an assembly would become altogether impossible if the members numbered ten thousand. Even if we imagined the means of communication to become much better than those which now exist, how would it be possible to assemble such a multitude in a given place, at a stated time, and with the frequency demanded by the exigencies of party life? In addition must be considered the physiological impossibility even for the most powerful orator of making himself heard by a crowd of ten thousand persons. There are, however, other reasons of a technical and administrative character which render impossible the direct self-government of large groups. If Peter wrongs Paul, it is out of the question that all the other citizens should hasten to the spot to undertake a personal examination of the matter in dispute, and to take the part of Paul against Peter. By parity of reasoning, in the modern democratic party, it is impossible for the collectivity to undertake the direct settlement of all the controversies that may arise.

Hence the need for delegation, for the system in which delegates represent the mass and carry out its will. Even in groups sincerely animated with the democratic spirit, current business, the preparation and the carrying out of the most important actions, is necessarily left in the hands of individuals. It is well known that the impossibility for the people to exercise a legislative power directly in popular assemblies led the democratic idealists of Spain to demand, as the least of evils, a system of popular representation and a parliamentary state.

Originally the chief is merely the servant of the mass. The organization is based upon the absolute equality of all its members. Equality is here understood in its most general sense, as an equality of like men. In many countries, as in idealist Italy (and in certain regions in Germany where the socialist movement is still in its infancy), this equality is manifested, among other ways, by the mutual use of the familiar "thou," which is employed by the most poorly paid wage-labourer in addressing the most distinguished intellectual. This generic conception of equality is, however, gradually replaced by the idea of equality among comrades belonging to the same organization, all of whose members enjoy the same rights. The democratic principle aims at guaranteeing to all an equal influence and an equal participation in the regulation of the common interests. All are electors, and all are eligible for office. The fundamental postulate of the *Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme*<sup>2</sup> finds here its theoretical application. All the offices are

<sup>2</sup> [*Declaration of the Rights of Man.*]

filled by election. The officials, executive organs of the general will, play a merely subordinate part, are always dependent upon the collectivity, and can be deprived of their office at any moment. The mass of the party is omnipotent.

At the outset, the attempt is made to depart as little as possible from pure democracy by subordinating the delegates altogether to the will of the mass, by tying them hand and foot. In the early days of the movement of the Italian agricultural workers, the chief of the league required a majority of four-fifths of the votes to secure election. When disputes arose with the employers about wages, the representative of the organization, before undertaking any negotiations, had to be furnished with a written authority, authorized by the signature of every member of the corporation. All the accounts of the body were open to the examination of the members, at any time. There were two reasons for this. First of all, the desire was to avoid the spread of mistrust through the mass, "this poison which gradually destroys even the strongest organism." In the second place, this usage allowed each one of the members to learn bookkeeping, and to acquire such a general knowledge of the working of the corporation as to enable him at any time to take over its leadership. It is obvious that democracy in this sense is applicable only on a very small scale. In the infancy of the English labour movement, in many of the trade-unions, the delegates were either appointed in rotation from among all the members, or were chosen by lot. Gradually, however, the delegates' duties become more complicated; some individual ability becomes essential, a certain oratorical gift, and a considerable amount of objective knowledge. It thus becomes impossible to trust to blind chance, to the fortune of alphabetic succession, or to the order of priority, in the choice of a delegation whose members must possess certain peculiar personal aptitudes if they are to discharge their mission to the general advantage.

Such were the methods which prevailed in the early days of the labour movement to enable the masses to participate in party and trade-union administration. To-day they are falling into disuse, and in the development of the modern political aggregate there is a tendency to shorten and stereotype the process which transforms the led into a leader—a process which has hitherto developed by the natural course of events. Here and there voices make themselves heard demanding a sort of official consecration for the leaders, insisting that it is necessary to constitute a class of professional politicians, of approved and registered experts in political life. Ferdinand Tönnies advocates that the party should institute regular examinations for the nomination of socialist parliamentary candidates, and for the appointment

of party secretaries. Heinrich Herkner goes even farther. He contends that the great trade-unions cannot long maintain their existence if they persist in entrusting the management of their affairs to persons drawn from the rank and file, who have risen to command stage by stage solely in consequence of practical aptitudes acquired in the service of the organization. He refers, in this connection, to the unions that are controlled by the employers, whose officials are for the most part university men. He foresees that in the near future all the labour organizations will be forced to abandon proletarian exclusiveness, and in the choice of their officials to give the preference to persons of an education that is superior alike in economic, legal, technical, and commercial respects. . . .

It is undeniable that . . . educational institutions for the officials of the party and of the labour organizations tend, above all, towards the artificial creation of an *élite* of the working-class, of a caste of cadets composed of persons who aspire to the command of the proletarian rank and file. Without wishing it, there is thus effected a continuous enlargement of the gulf which divides the leaders from the masses.

The technical specialization that inevitably results from all extensive organization renders necessary what is called expert leadership. Consequently the power of determination comes to be considered one of the specific attributes of leadership, and is gradually withdrawn from the masses to be concentrated in the hands of the leaders alone. Thus the leaders, who were at first no more than the executive organs of the collective will, soon emancipate themselves from the mass and become independent of its control.

Organization implies the tendency to oligarchy. In every organization, whether it be a political party, a professional union, or any other association of the kind, the aristocratic tendency manifests itself very clearly. The mechanism of the organization, while conferring a solidity of structure, induces serious changes in the organized mass, completely inverting the respective position of the leaders and the led. As a result of organization, every party or professional union becomes divided into a minority of directors and a majority of directed.

It has been remarked that in the lower stages of civilization tyranny is dominant. Democracy cannot come into existence until there is attained a subsequent and more highly developed stage of social life. Freedoms and privileges, and among these latter the privilege of taking part in the direction of public affairs, are at first restricted to the few. Recent times have been characterized by the gradual extension of these privileges to a widening circle. This is what we know as the era of democracy. But if we pass from



the sphere of the state to the sphere of party, we may observe that as democracy continues to develop, a backwash sets in. With the advance of organization, democracy tends to decline. Democratic evolution has a parabolic course. At the present time, at any rate as far as party life is concerned, democracy is in the descending phase. It may be enunciated as a general rule that the increase in the power of the leaders is directly proportional with the extension of the organization. In the various parties and labour organizations of different countries the influence of the leaders is mainly determined (apart from racial and individual grounds) by the varying development of organization. Where organization is stronger, we find that there is a lesser degree of applied democracy.

Every solidly constructed organization, whether it be a democratic state, a political party, or a league of proletarians for the resistance of economic oppression, presents a soil eminently favourable for the differentiation of organs and of functions. The more extended and the more ramified the official apparatus of the organization, the greater the number of its members, the fuller its treasury, and the more widely circulated its press, the less efficient becomes the direct control exercised by the rank and file, and the more is this control replaced by the increasing power of committees. Into all parties there insinuates itself that indirect electoral system which in public life the democratic parties fight against with all possible vigour. Yet in party life the influence of this system must be more disastrous than in the far more extensive life of the state. Even in the party congresses, which represent the party-life seven times sifted, we find that it becomes more and more general to refer all important questions to committees which debate *in camera*.

As organization develops, not only do the tasks of the administration become more difficult and more complicated, but, further, its duties become enlarged and specialized to such a degree that it is no longer possible to take them all in at a single glance. In a rapidly progressive movement, it is not only the growth in the number of duties, but also the higher quality of these, which imposes a more extensive differentiation of function. Nominally, and according to the letter of the rules, all the acts of the leaders are subject to the ever vigilant criticism of the rank and file. In theory the leader is merely an employee bound by the instructions he receives. He has to carry out the orders of the mass, of which he is no more than the executive organ. But in actual fact, as the organization increases in size, this control becomes purely fictitious. The members have to give up the idea of themselves conducting or even supervising the whole administration, and are compelled to hand these tasks over to trustworthy persons specially nominated for the purpose,

to salaried officials. The rank and file must content themselves with summary reports, and with the appointment of occasional special committees of inquiry. Yet this does not derive from any special change in the rules of the organization. It is by very necessity that a simple employee gradually becomes a "leader," acquiring a freedom of action which he ought not to possess. The chief then becomes accustomed to despatch important business on his own responsibility, and to decide various questions relating to the life of the party without any attempt to consult the rank and file. It is obvious that democratic control thus undergoes a progressive diminution, and is ultimately reduced to an infinitesimal minimum. In all the socialist parties there is a continual increase in the number of functions withdrawn from the electoral assemblies and transferred to the executive committees. In this way there is constructed a powerful and complicated edifice. The principle of division of labour coming more and more into operation, executive authority undergoes division and subdivision. There is thus constituted a rigorously defined and hierarchical bureaucracy. In the catechism of party duties, the strict observance of hierarchical rules becomes the first article. This hierarchy comes into existence as the outcome of technical conditions, and its constitution is an essential postulate of the regular functioning of the party machine.

It is indisputable that the oligarchical and bureaucratic tendency of party organization is a matter of technical and practical necessity. It is the inevitable product of the very principle of organization. Not even the most radical wing of the various socialist parties raises any objection to this retrogressive evolution, the contention being that democracy is only a form of organization and that where it ceases to be possible to harmonize democracy with organization, it is better to abandon the former than the latter. Organization, since it is the only means of attaining the ends of socialism, is considered to comprise within itself the revolutionary content of the party, and this essential content must never be sacrificed for the sake of form.

In all times, in all phases of development, in all branches of human activity, there have been leaders. It is true that certain socialists, above all the orthodox Marxists of Germany, seek to convince us that socialism knows nothing of "leaders," that the party has "employees" merely, being a democratic party, and the existence of leaders being incompatible with democracy. But a false assertion such as this cannot override a sociological law. Its only result is, in fact, to strengthen the rule of the leaders, for it serves to conceal from the mass a danger which really threatens democracy.

For technical and administrative reasons, no less than for tactical reasons,

a strong organization needs an equally strong leadership. As long as an organization is loosely constructed and vague in its outlines, no professional leadership can arise. The anarchists, who have a horror of all fixed organization, have no regular leaders. In the early days of German socialism, the *Vertrauensmann* (*homme de confiance*)<sup>3</sup> continued to exercise his ordinary occupation. If he received any pay for his work for the party, the remuneration was on an extremely modest scale, and was no more than a temporary grant. His function could never be regarded by him as a regular source of income. The employee of the organization was still a simple workmate, sharing the mode of life and the social condition of his fellows. To-day he has been replaced for the most part by the professional politician, *Berzirksleiter* (U.S. ward-boss), etc. The more solid the structure of an organization becomes in the course of the evolution of the modern political party, the more marked becomes the tendency to replace the emergency leader by the professional leader. Every party organization which has attained to a considerable degree of complication demands that there should be a certain number of persons who devote all their activities to the work of the party. The mass provides these by delegation, and the delegates, regularly appointed, become permanent representatives of the mass for the direction of its affairs.

For democracy, however, the first appearance of professional leadership marks the beginning of the end, and this, above all, on account of the logical impossibility of the "representative" system, whether in parliamentary life or in party delegation. . . .

Popular sovereignty has recently been subjected to a profound criticism by a group of Italian writers conservative in their tendency. Gaetano Mosca speaks of "the falsity of the parliamentary legend." He says that the idea of popular representation as a free and spontaneous transference of the sovereignty of the electors (collectivity) to a certain number of elected persons (minority) is based upon the absurd premise that the minority can be bound to the collective will by unbreakable bonds. In actual fact, directly the election is finished, the power of the mass of electors over the delegate comes to an end. The deputy regards himself as authorized arbiter of the situation, and really is such. If among the electors any are to be found who possess some influence over the representative of the people, their number is very small; they are the big guns of the constituency or of the local branch of the party. In other words, they are persons who, whilst belonging by social position to the class of the ruled, have in fact come to form part of the ruling oligarchy.

<sup>3</sup> [*Confidential agent.*]

This criticism of the representative system is applicable above all in our own days, in which political life continually assumes more complex forms. As this complexity increases, it becomes more and more absurd to attempt to "represent" a heterogeneous mass in all the innumerable problems which arise out of the increasing differentiation of our political and economic life. To represent, in this sense, comes to mean that the purely individual desire masquerades and is accepted as the will of the mass. In certain isolated cases, where the questions involved are extremely simple, and where the delegated authority is of brief duration, representation is possible. But permanent representation will always be tantamount to the exercise of dominion by the representatives over the represented. . . .

#### CHAPTER IX: ACCESSORY PECULIARITIES OF THE MASSES

To enable us to understand and properly to appreciate the superiority of the leaders over the mass it is necessary to turn our attention to the characteristics of the rank and file. The question arises, what are these masses?

It has already been shown that a general sentiment of indifference towards the management of its own affairs is natural to the crowd, even when organized to form political parties.

The very composition of the mass is such as to render it unable to resist the power of an order of leaders aware of its own strength. An analysis of the German trade unions in respect of the age of their members gives a sufficiently faithful picture of the composition also of the various socialist parties. The great majority of the membership ranges in age from 25 to 39 years. Quite young men find other ways of employing their leisure; they are heedless, their thoughts run in erotic channels, they are always hoping that some miracle will deliver them from the need of passing their whole lives as simple wage-earners, and for these reasons they are slow to join a trade union. The men over forty, weary and disillusioned, commonly resign their membership (unless retained in the union by purely personal interest, to secure out-of-work pay, insurance against illness, and the like). Consequently there is lacking in the organization the force of control of ardent and irreverent youth and also that of experienced maturity. In other words, the leaders have to do with a mass of members to whom they are superior in respect of age and experience of life, whilst they have nothing to fear from the relentless criticism which is so peculiarly characteristic of men who have just attained to virility.

Another important consideration as to the composition of the rank and file who have to be led is its fluctuating character. It seems, at any rate, that



this may be deduced from a report of the socialist section of Munich for the year 1906. It contains statistics, showing analytically the individual duration of membership. The figures in parenthesis indicate the total number of members, including those members who had previously belonged to other sections.

*Membership Classified According to Duration*

		%	
Less than 6 months	1,502	about 23	(1,582)
From 6 months to 2 years	1,620	" 24	(1,816)
" 2 to 3 years	684	" 10	(995)
" 3 to 4 "	1,020	" 15	(1,965)
" 4 to 5 "	507	" 7½	(891)
" 5 to 6 "	270	" 4	(844)
" 6 to 7 "	127	" 2	(604)
" 7 to 8 "	131	" 2	(1,289)
More than 8 "	833	" 12½	(1,666)

The fluctuating character of the membership is manifest in even greater degree in the German trade unions. This has given rise to the saying that a trade union is like a pigeon-house where the pigeons enter and leave at their caprice. The German Metalworkers' Federation (Deutscher Metallarbeiterverband) had, during the years 1906 to 1908, 210,561 new members. But the percentage of withdrawals increased in 1906 to 60, in 1907 to 83, and 1908 to 100. This shows us that the bonds connecting the bulk of the masses to their organization are extremely slender and that it is only a small proportion of the organized workers who feel themselves really at one with their unions. Hence the leaders, when compared with the masses, whose composition varies from moment to moment, constitute a more stable and more constant element of the organized membership. . . .

## *Part II*

### CHAPTER I: THE STABILITY OF LEADERSHIP

. . . In the working-class organization, whether founded for political or for economic ends, just as much as in the life of the state, it is indispensable that the official should remain in office for a considerable time, so that he may familiarize himself with the work he has to do, may gain practical experience, for he cannot become a useful official until he has been given time to work himself into his new office. Moreover, he will not devote himself zealously to his task, he will not feel himself thoroughly at one with the aim he is intended to pursue, if he is likely to be dismissed at any moment; he needs

the sense of security provided by the thought that nothing but circumstances of an unforeseen and altogether extraordinary character will deprive him of his position. Appointment to office for short terms is democratic, but is quite unpractical alike on technical and psychological grounds. Since it fails to arouse in the employee a proper sense of responsibility, it throws the door open to administrative anarchy. In the ministries of lands under a parliamentary regime, where the whole official apparatus has to suffer from its subordination to the continuous changes in majorities, it is well known that neglect and disorder reign supreme. Where the ministers are changed every few months, everyone who attains to power thinks chiefly of making a profitable use of that power while it lasts. Moreover, the confusion of orders and regulations which results from the rapid succession of different persons to command renders control extraordinarily difficult, and when abuses are committed it is easy for those who are guilty to shift the responsibility on to other shoulders. "Rotation in office," as the Americans call it, no doubt corresponds to the pure principle of democracy. Up to a certain point it is adapted to check the formation of a bureaucratic spirit of caste. But this advantage is more than compensated by the exploitive methods of ephemeral leaders, with all their disastrous consequences. On the other hand, one of the great advantages of monarchy is that the hereditary prince, having an eye to the interests of his children and his successors, possesses an objective and permanent interest in his position, and almost always abstains from a policy which would hopelessly impair the vital energies of his country, just as the landed proprietor usually rejects methods of cultivation which, while providing large immediate returns, would sterilize the soil to the detriment of his heirs.

Thus, no less in time of peace than in time of war, the relationships between different organizations demand a certain degree of personal and tactical continuity, for without such continuity the political authority of the organization would be impaired. This is just as true of political parties as it is true of states. In international European politics, England has always been regarded as an untrustworthy ally, for her history shows that no other country has ever been able to confide in agreements concluded with England. The reason is to be found in this, that the foreign policy of the United Kingdom is largely dependent upon the party in power, and party changes occur with considerable rapidity. Similarly, the party that changes its leaders too often runs the risk of finding itself unable to contract useful alliances at an opportune moment. The two gravest defects of genuine democracy, its lack of stability . . . and its difficulty of mobilization, are dependent on the recog-

nized right of the sovereign masses to take part in the management of their own affairs.

In order to bind the leader to the will of the mass and to reduce him to the level of a simple executive organ of the mass, certain primitive democracies have at all times sought to apply, in addition to the means previously enumerated, measures of moral coercion. In Spain, the patriotic revolutionary Junta of 1808 insisted that thirty proletarians should accompany the general who was to negotiate with the French, and these compelled him, in opposition to his own convictions, to reject all Napoleon's proposals. In modern democratic parties there still prevails the practice, more or less general according to the degree of development these parties have attained, that the rank and file send to the congresses delegates who are fettered by definite instructions, the aim of this being to prevent the delegate from giving upon any decisive question a vote adverse to the opinion of the majority of those whom he represents. This precaution may be efficacious in certain cases, where the questions concerned are simple and clear. But the delegate, since he has no freedom of choice, is reduced to the part of puppet, and cannot allow himself to be influenced by the arguments he hears at the congress or by new matters of fact which are brought to light in the course of the debate. But the result is, that not only is all discussion rendered superfluous in advance, but also that the vote itself is often falsified, since it does not correspond to the real opinions of the delegates. Of late fixed instructions have less often been given to the delegate, for it has become manifest that this practice impairs the cohesion so urgently necessary to every party, and provokes perturbations and uncertainties in its leadership.

In proportion as the chiefs become detached from the mass they show themselves more and more inclined, when gaps in their own ranks have to be filled, to effect this, not by way of popular election, but by co-optation, and also to increase their own effectives wherever possible, by creating new posts upon their own initiative. There arises in the leaders a tendency to isolate themselves, to form a sort of cartel, and to surround themselves, as it were, with a wall, within which they will admit those only who are of their own way of thinking. Instead of allowing their successors to be appointed by the choice of the rank and file, the leaders do all in their power to choose these successors for themselves, and to fill up gaps in their own ranks directly or indirectly by the exercise of their own volition. . . .

In the nomination of candidates for election we find, in addition, another grave oligarchical phenomenon, nepotism. The choice of the candidates almost always depends upon a little clique, consisting of the local leaders

and their assistants, which suggests suitable names to the rank and file. In many cases the constituency comes to be regarded as a family property. In Italy, although democratic principles are greatly honoured, we not infrequently find that when a representative dies, or can no longer continue in office, the suffrages of the constituency are transferred without question to his son or to his younger brother, so that the position is kept in the family.

Those who love paradox may be inclined to regard this process as the first symptom marking the passage of democracy from a system of plebiscitary Bonapartism to one of hereditary monarchy. . . .

### *Part III*

#### CHAPTER III: IDENTIFICATION OF THE PARTY WITH THE LEADER

. . . The despotism of the leaders does not arise solely from a vulgar lust of power or from uncontrolled egoism, but is often the outcome of a profound and sincere conviction of their own value and of the services which they have rendered to the common cause. The bureaucracy which is most faithful and most efficient in the discharge of its duties is also the most dictatorial. To quote Wolfgang Heine:

The objection is invalid that the incorruptibility and efficiency of our party officials, and their love for the great cause, would suffice to raise a barrier against the development of autocracy within the party. The very opposite is true. Officials of high technical efficiency who unselfishly aim at the general good, like those whom we are fortunate enough to possess in the party, are more than all others inclined, being well aware of the importance of their own services, to regard as inalterable laws whatever seems to them right and proper, to suppress conflicting tendencies on the ground of the general interest, and thus to impose restraints upon the healthy progress of the party.

Similarly, where we have to do with excellent and incorruptible state officials like those of the German empire, the megalomaniac substitution of thing for person is partly due to the upright consciences of the officials and to their great devotion to duty. Among the members of such a bureaucracy, there is hardly one who does not feel that a pinprick directed against his own person is a crime committed against the whole state. . . . Each one of them regards himself as an impersonation of a portion of the whole state, and feels that this portion will suffer if the authority of any other portion is impaired. Further, the bureaucrat is apt to imagine that he knows the needs of the masses better than these do themselves, an opinion which may be sound enough in individual instances, but which for the most part is no more than a form



of megalomania. Undoubtedly the party official is less exposed than the state official to the danger of becoming fossilized, for in most cases he has work as a public speaker, and in this way he maintains a certain degree of contact with the masses. On the other hand, the applause which he seeks and receives on these occasions cannot fail to stimulate his personal vanity.

When in any organization the oligarchy has attained an advanced stage of development, the leaders begin to identify with themselves, not merely the party institutions, but even the party property, this phenomenon being common both to the party and to the state. In the conflict between the leaders and the rank and file of the German trade unions regarding the right to strike, the leaders have more than once maintained that the decision in this matter is morally and legally reserved for themselves, because it is they who provide the financial resources which enable the workers to remain on strike. This view is no more than the ultimate consequence of that oligarchical mode of thought which inevitably leads to a complete forgetfulness of true democratic principles. In Genoa, one of the labour leaders, whose influence had increased *pari passu* with the growing strength of the organized proletariat of the city, and who, enjoying the unrestricted confidence of his comrades, had acquired the most various powers and had filled numerous positions in the party, regarded himself as justified, when as a representative of the workers he made contracts with capitalists and concluded similar affairs, in feathering his own nest in addition to looking after the workers' interests. . . .

## Part VI

### CHAPTER II: DEMOCRACY AND THE IRON LAW OF OLIGARCHY

The party, regarded as an entity, as a piece of mechanism, is not necessarily identifiable with the totality of its members, and still less so with the class to which these belong. The party is created as a means to secure an end. Having, however, become an end in itself, endowed with aims and interests of its own, it undergoes detachment, from the teleological point of view, from the class which it represents. In a party, it is far from obvious that the interests of the masses which have combined to form the party will coincide with the interests of the bureaucracy in which the party becomes personified. The interests of the body of employees are always conservative, and in a given political situation these interests may dictate a defensive and even a reactionary policy when the interests of the working class demand a bold and aggressive policy; in other cases, although these are very rare,

the rôles may be reversed. By a universally applicable social law, every organ of the collectivity, brought into existence through the need for the division of labour, creates for itself, as soon as it becomes consolidated, interests peculiar to itself. The existence of these special interests involves a necessary conflict with the interests of the collectivity. Nay, more, social strata fulfilling peculiar functions tend to become isolated, to produce organs fitted for the defence of their own peculiar interests. In the long run they tend to undergo transformation into distinct classes.

The sociological phenomena whose general characteristics have been discussed . . . offer numerous vulnerable points to the scientific opponents of democracy. These phenomena would seem to prove beyond dispute that society cannot exist without a "dominant" or "political" class, and that the ruling class, whilst its elements are subject to a frequent partial renewal, nevertheless constitutes the only factor of sufficiently durable efficacy in the history of human development. According to this view, the government, or, if the phrase be preferred, the state, cannot be anything other than the organization of a minority. It is the aim of this minority to impose upon the rest of society a "legal order," which is the outcome of the exigencies of dominion and of the exploitation of the mass of helots effected by the ruling minority, and can never be truly representative of the majority. The majority is thus permanently incapable of self-government. Even when the discontent of the masses culminates in a successful attempt to deprive the bourgeoisie of power, this is after all, so Mosca contends, effected only in appearance; always and necessarily there springs from the masses a new organized minority which raises itself to the rank of a governing class. Thus the majority of human beings, in a condition of eternal tutelage, are predestined by tragic necessity to submit to the dominion of a small minority, and must be content to constitute the pedestal of an oligarchy.

The principle that one dominant class inevitably succeeds to another, and the law deduced from that principle that oligarchy is, as it were, a preordained form of the common life of great social aggregates, far from conflicting with or replacing the materialist conception of history, completes that conception and reinforces it. There is no essential contradiction between the doctrine that history is the record of a continued series of class struggles and the doctrine that class struggles invariably culminate in the creation of new oligarchies which undergo fusion with the old. The existence of a political class does not conflict with the essential content of Marxism, considered not as an economic dogma but as a philosophy of history; for in each particular instance the dominance of a political class arises as the result-

ant of the relationships between the different social forces competing for supremacy, these forces being of course considered dynamically and not quantitatively.

The Russian socialist Alexandre Herzen, whose chief permanent claim to significance is found in the psychological interest of his writings, declared that from the day in which man became accessory to property and his life a continued struggle for money, the political groups of the bourgeois world underwent division into two camps: the owners, tenaciously keeping hold of their millions; and the dispossessed, who would gladly expropriate the owners, but lack the power to do so. Thus historical evolution merely represents an uninterrupted series of oppositions (in the parliamentary sense of this term), "attaining one after another to power, and passing from the sphere of envy to the sphere of avarice."

Thus the social revolution would not effect any real modification of the internal structure of the mass. The socialists might conquer, but not socialism, which would perish in the moment of its adherents' triumph. We are tempted to speak of this process as a tragicomedy in which the masses are content to devote all their energies to effecting a change of masters. All that is left for the workers is the honour "*de participer au recrutement gouvernemental.*"<sup>4</sup> The result seems a poor one, especially if we take into account the psychological fact that even the purest of idealists who attains to power for a few years is unable to escape the corruption which the exercise of power carries in its train. . . .

Fourier defined modern society as a mechanism in which the extremest individual licence prevailed, without affording any guarantee to the individual against the usurpations of the mass, or to the mass against the usurpations of the individual. History seems to teach us that no popular movement, however energetic and vigorous, is capable of producing profound and permanent changes in the social organism of the civilized world. The preponderant elements of the movement, the men who lead and nourish it, end by undergoing a gradual detachment from the masses, and are attracted within the orbit of the "political class." They perhaps contribute to this class a certain number of "new ideas," but they also endow it with more creative energy and enhanced practical intelligence, thus providing for the ruling class an ever-renewed youth. The "political class" (continuing to employ Mosca's convenient phrase) has unquestionably an extremely fine sense of its possibilities and its means of defence. It displays a remarkable force of attraction and a vigorous capacity for absorption which rarely fail

<sup>4</sup> [*To participate in the recruitment of their governors.*]

to exercise an influence even upon the most embittered and uncompromising of its adversaries. From the historical point of view, the anti-romanticists are perfectly right when they sum up their scepticism in such caustic phraseology as this: "Qu'est ce qu'une révolution? Des gens qui se tirent des coups de fusil dans une rue: cela casse beaucoup de carreaux; il n'y a guère que les vitriers qui y trouvent du profit. . . ." <sup>5</sup> Or we may say, as the song runs in *Madame Angot*: "Ce n'est pas la peine de changer de gouvernement!" <sup>6</sup> In France, the classic land of social theories and experiments, such pessimism has struck the deepest roots. . . .

#### CHAPTER IV: FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Leadership is a necessary phenomenon in every form of social life. Consequently it is not the task of science to inquire whether this phenomenon is good or evil, or predominantly one or the other. But there is great scientific value in the demonstration that every system of leadership is incompatible with the most essential postulates of democracy. We are now aware that the law of the historic necessity of oligarchy is primarily based upon a series of facts of experience. Like all other scientific laws, sociological laws are derived from empirical observation. In order, however, to deprive our axiom of its purely descriptive character, and to confer upon it that status of analytical explanation which can alone transform a formula into a law, it does not suffice to contemplate from a unitary outlook those phenomena which may be empirically established; we must also study the determining causes of these phenomena. Such has been our task.

Now, if we leave out of consideration the tendency of the leaders to organize themselves and to consolidate their interests, and if we leave also out of consideration the gratitude of the led towards the leaders, and the general immobility and passivity of the masses, we are led to conclude that the principal cause of oligarchy in the democratic parties is to be found in the technical indispensability of leadership.

The process which has begun in consequence of the differentiation of functions in the party is completed by a complex of qualities which the leaders acquire through their detachment from the mass. At the outset, leaders arise *spontaneously*; their functions are *accessory* and *gratuitous*. Soon, however, they become *professional* leaders, and in this second stage of development they are *stable* and *irremovable*.

<sup>5</sup> [What is a revolution? Some people shooting off guns in a street: Lots of shopwindows get broken that way; but it's really only the glaziers who profit. . . .]

<sup>6</sup> [It's not worth the bother to change governments.]



It follows that the explanation of the oligarchical phenomenon which thus results is partly *psychological*; oligarchy derives, that is to say, from the psychical transformations which the leading personalities in the parties undergo in the course of their lives. But also, and still more, oligarchy depends upon what we may term the *psychology of organization itself*, that is to say, upon the tactical and technical necessities which result from the consolidation of every disciplined political aggregate. Reduced to its most concise expression, the fundamental sociological law of political parties (the term "political" being here used in its most comprehensive significance) may be formulated in the following terms: "It is organization which gives birth to the dominion of the elected over the electors, of the mandataries over the mandators, of the delegates over the delegators. Who says organization, says oligarchy."

Every party organization represents an oligarchical power grounded upon a democratic basis. We find everywhere electors and elected. Also we find everywhere that the power of the elected leaders over the electing masses is almost unlimited. The oligarchical structure of the building suffocates the basic democratic principle. That which *is* oppresses *that which ought to be*. For the masses, this essential difference between the reality and the ideal remains a mystery. Socialists often cherish a sincere belief that a new *élite* of politicians will keep faith better than did the old. The notion of the representation of popular interests, a notion to which the great majority of democrats, and in especial the working-class masses of the German-speaking lands, cleave with so much tenacity and confidence, is an illusion engendered by a false illumination, is an effect of mirage. In one of the most delightful pages of his analysis of modern Don Quixotism, Alphonse Daudet shows us how the "brav" commandant Bravida, who has never quitted Tarascon, gradually comes to persuade himself, influenced by the burning southern sun, that he has been to Shanghai and has had all kinds of heroic adventures. Similarly the modern proletariat, enduringly influenced by glib-tongued persons intellectually superior to the mass, ends by believing that by flocking to the poll and entrusting its social and economic cause to a delegate, its direct participation in power will be assured.

The formation of oligarchies within the various forms of democracy is the outcome of organic necessity, and consequently affects every organization, be it socialist or even anarchist. Haller long ago noted that in every form of social life relationships of dominion and of dependence are created by Nature herself. The supremacy of the leaders in the democratic and revolutionary parties has to be taken into account in every historic situation present and to come, even though only a few and exceptional minds will be fully

conscious of its existence. The mass will never rule except *in abstracto*. Consequently the question we have to discuss is not whether ideal democracy is realizable, but rather to what point and in what degree democracy is desirable, possible, and realizable at a given moment. In the problem as thus stated we recognize the fundamental problem of politics as a science. Whoever fails to perceive this must, as Sombart says, either be so blind and fanatical as not to see that the democratic current daily makes undeniable advance, or else must be so inexperienced and devoid of critical faculty as to be unable to understand that all order and all civilization must exhibit aristocratic features. The great error of socialists, an error committed in consequence of their lack of adequate psychological knowledge, is to be found in their combination of pessimism regarding the present, with rosy optimism and immeasurable confidence regarding the future. A realistic view of the mental condition of the masses shows beyond question that even if we admit the possibility of moral improvement in mankind, the human materials with whose use politicians and philosophers cannot dispense in their plans of social reconstruction are not of a character to justify excessive optimism. Within the limits of time for which human provision is possible, optimism will remain the exclusive privilege of utopian thinkers.

The socialist parties, like the trade unions, are living forms of social life. As such they react with the utmost energy against any attempt to analyse their structure or their nature, as if it were a method of vivisection. When science attains to results which conflict with their apriorist ideology, they revolt with all their power. Yet their defence is extremely feeble. Those among the representatives of such organizations whose scientific earnestness and personal good faith make it impossible for them to deny outright the existence of oligarchical tendencies in every form of democracy, endeavour to explain these tendencies as the outcome of a kind of atavism in the mentality of the masses, characteristic of the youth of the movement. The masses, they assure us, are still infected by the oligarchic virus simply because they have been oppressed during long centuries of slavery, and have never yet enjoyed an autonomous existence. The socialist regime, however, will soon restore them to health, and will furnish them with all the capacity necessary for self-government. Nothing could be more anti-scientific than the supposition that as soon as socialists have gained possession of governmental power it will suffice for the masses to exercise a little control over their leaders to secure that the interests of these leaders shall coincide perfectly with the interests of the led. This idea may be compared with the view of Jules Guesde, no less anti-scientific than anti-Marxist (though Guesde proclaims

himself a Marxist), that whereas Christianity has made God into a man, socialism will make man into a god.

The objective immaturity of the mass is not a mere transitory phenomenon which will disappear with the progress of democratization. . . . On the contrary, it derives from the vary nature of the mass as mass, for this, even when organized, suffers from an incurable incompetence for the solution of the diverse problems which present themselves for solution—because the mass *per se* is amorphous, and therefore needs division of labour, specialization, and guidance. “L’espèce humaine veut être gouvernée; elle le sera. J’ai honte de mon espèce,”<sup>7</sup> wrote Proudhon from his prison in 1850. Man as individual is by nature predestined to be guided, and to be guided all the more in proportion as the functions of life undergo division and subdivision. To an enormously greater degree is guidance necessary for the social group.

From this chain of reasoning and from these scientific convictions it would be erroneous to conclude that we should renounce all endeavours to ascertain the limits which may be imposed upon the powers exercised over the individual by oligarchies (state, dominant class, party, etc.). It would be an error to abandon the desperate enterprise of endeavouring to discover a social order which will render possible the complete realization of the idea of popular sovereignty. In the present work . . . it has not been [the writer’s] aim to indicate new paths. But it seemed necessary to lay considerable stress upon the pessimist aspect of democracy which is forced on us by historical study. We had to inquire whether, and within what limits, democracy must remain purely ideal, possessing no other value than that of a moral criterion which renders it possible to appreciate the varying degrees of that oligarchy which is immanent in every social regime. In other words, we have had to inquire if, and in what degree, democracy is an ideal which we can never hope to realize in practice. A further aim of this work was the demolition of some of the facile and superficial democratic illusions which trouble science and lead the masses astray. Finally, the author desired to throw light upon certain sociological tendencies which oppose the reign of democracy, and to a still greater extent oppose the reign of socialism.

The writer does not wish to deny that every revolutionary working-class movement, and every movement sincerely inspired by the democratic spirit, may have a certain value as contributing to the enfeeblement of oligarchic tendencies. The peasant in the fable, when on his death-bed, tells his sons that a treasure is buried in the field. After the old man’s death the sons dig everywhere in order to discover the treasure. They do not find it. But

<sup>7</sup> [*The human species wants to be governed; it will be. I am ashamed of my species.*]

their indefatigable labour improves the soil and secures for them a comparative well-being. The treasure in the fable may well symbolize democracy. Democracy is a treasure which no one will ever discover by deliberate search. But in continuing our search, in labouring indefatigably to discover the indiscoverable, we shall perform a work which will have fertile results in the democratic sense. We have seen, indeed, that within the bosom of the democratic working-class party are born the very tendencies to counteract which that party came into existence. Thanks to the diversity and to the unequal worth of the elements of the party, these tendencies often give rise to manifestations which border on tyranny. We have seen that the replacement of the traditional legitimism of the powers-that-be by the brutal plebiscitary rule of Bonapartist parvenus does not furnish these tendencies with any moral or aesthetic superiority. Historical evolution mocks all the prophylactic measures that have been adopted for the prevention of oligarchy. If laws are passed to control the dominion of the leaders, it is the laws which gradually weaken, and not the leaders. Sometimes, however, the democratic principle carries with it, if not a cure, at least a palliative, for the disease of oligarchy. When Victor Considérant formulated his "democratico-pacifist" socialism, he declared that socialism signified, not the rule of society by the lower classes of the population, but the government and organization of society in the interest of all, through the intermediation of a group of citizens; and he added that the numerical importance of this group must increase *pari passu* with social development. This last observation draws attention to a point of capital importance. It is, in fact, a general characteristic of democracy, and hence also of the labour movement, to stimulate and to strengthen in the individual the intellectual aptitudes for criticism and control. We have seen how the progressive bureaucratization of the democratic organism tends to neutralize the beneficial effects of such criticism and such control. None the less it is true that the labour movement, in virtue of the theoretical postulates it proclaims, is apt to bring into existence (in opposition to the will of the leaders) a certain number of free spirits who, moved by principle, by instinct, or by both, desire to revise the base upon which authority is established. Urged on by conviction or by temperament, they are never weary of asking an eternal "Why?" about every human institution. Now this predisposition towards free inquiry, in which we cannot fail to recognize one of the most precious factors of civilization, will gradually increase in proportion as the economic status of the masses undergoes improvement and becomes more stable, and in proportion as they are admitted more effectively to the advantages of civilization. A wider educa-



tion involves an increasing capacity for exercising control. Can we not observe every day that among the well-to-do the authority of the leaders over the led, extensive though it be, is never so unrestricted as in the case of the leaders of the poor? Taken in the mass, the poor are powerless and disarmed vis-à-vis their leaders. Their intellectual and cultural inferiority makes it impossible for them to see whither the leader is going, or to estimate in advance the significance of his actions. It is, consequently, the great task of social education to raise the intellectual level of the masses, so that they may be enabled, within the limits of what is possible, to counteract the oligarchical tendencies of the working-class movement.

In view of the perennial incompetence of the masses, we have to recognize the existence of two regulative principles:

1. The *ideological* tendency of democracy towards criticism and control;
2. The *effective* counter-tendency of democracy towards the creation of parties ever more complex and ever more differentiated—parties, that is to say, which are increasingly based upon the competence of the few.

To the idealist, the analysis of the forms of contemporary democracy cannot fail to be a source of bitter deception and profound discouragement. Those alone, perhaps, are in a position to pass a fair judgment upon democracy who, without lapsing into dilettantist sentimentalism, recognize that all scientific and human ideals have relative values. If we wish to estimate the value of democracy, we must do so in comparison with its converse, pure aristocracy. The defects inherent in democracy are obvious. It is none the less true that as a form of social life we must choose democracy as the least of evils. The ideal government would doubtless be that of an aristocracy of persons at once morally good and technically efficient. But where shall we discover such an aristocracy? We may find it sometimes, though very rarely, as the outcome of deliberate selection; but we shall never find it where the hereditary principle remains in operation. Thus monarchy in its pristine purity must be considered as imperfection incarnate, as the most incurable of ills; from the moral point of view it is inferior even to the most revolting of demagogic dictatorships, for the corrupt organism of the latter at least contains a healthy principle upon whose working we may continue to base hopes of social resanation. It may be said, therefore, that the more humanity comes to recognize the advantages which democracy, however imperfect, presents over aristocracy, even at its best, the less likely is it that a recognition of the defects of democracy will provoke a return to aristocracy. Apart from certain formal differences and from the qualities which can be acquired only by good education and inheritance

(qualities in which aristocracy will always have the advantage over democracy—qualities which democracy either neglects altogether, or, attempting to imitate them, falsifies them to the point of caricature), the defects of democracy will be found to inhere in its inability to get rid of its aristocratic scoriae. On the other hand, nothing but a serene and frank examination of the oligarchical dangers of democracy will enable us to minimize these dangers, even though they can never be entirely avoided.

The democratic currents of history resemble successive waves. They break ever on the same shoal. They are ever renewed. This enduring spectacle is simultaneously encouraging and depressing. When democracies have gained a certain stage of development, they undergo a gradual transformation, adopting the aristocratic spirit, and in many cases also the aristocratic forms, against which at the outset they struggled so fiercely. Now new accusers arise to denounce the traitors; after an era of glorious combats and of inglorious power, they end by fusing with the old dominant class; whereupon once more they are in their turn attacked by fresh opponents who appeal to the name of democracy. It is probable that this cruel game will continue without end.

## GUNNAR MYRDAL

AMERICANS tend to regard their society as free of the domination of an elite and often consider discussion of the subject as applicable only to societies other than their own. Powerful traditions of economic and social individualism, and of democratic control of the political process, seem to eliminate the need for, and to make impossible the development of, a select body of leaders. Yet, as Gunnar Myrdal points out, in this selection taken from his study *An American Dilemma*, "the idea of leadership pervades American thought and collective life." According to the Swedish observer, the American, intent upon the pursuit of private goals, indifferent to political problems except sporadically and then only as couched in terms of "personalities," easily and most generally adopts an attitude of passivity toward politics. Despite his firm conviction that the "people" does and should rule—a conviction not entirely at odds with reality—the American seldom identifies himself as one of the people in a concrete political situation; he rarely participates, in a continuous sense, in political activity. In consequence, the individual leader, the organizer, the manipulator, seems to play a greater role in American life than Americans are prone to recognize.



### AN AMERICAN DILEMMA [II]

#### *The American Pattern of Individual Leadership and Mass Passivity*

##### I. "INTELLIGENT LEADERSHIP"

Despite the democratic organization of American society with its emphasis upon liberty, equality of opportunity (with a strong leaning in favor of the underdog), and individualism, the idea of leadership pervades American thought and collective action. The demand for "intelligent leadership" is raised in all political camps, social and professional groups, and, indeed, in every collective activity centered around any interest or purpose—church, school, business, recreation, philanthropy, the campus life of a college, the entertaining of a group of visitors, the selling of a patent medicine, the propagation of an idea or of an interest. As a standard demand it appears with great frequency

---

This selection has been reprinted from Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma* (Vol. II, pp. 709-719. Copyright 1944 by Harper and Bros.), by permission of the publisher.

in public speeches and newspaper editorials and will seldom be absent even when the social reformer or the social scientist speaks.

If an ordinary American faces a situation which he recognizes as a "problem" without having any specific views as to how to "solve" it, he tends to resort to two general recommendations: one, traditionally, is "education"; the other is "leadership." The belief in "education" is a part of, or a principal conclusion from, the American Creed. The demand for "leadership" plays on a different plane of his personality. It is a result less of a conscious ideological principle than of a pragmatic approach to those activities which require the cooperation of many individuals. For this reason it is also much less a part of Americans' self-knowledge. While the democratic Creed and the belief in education are an ever present popular theory with highest national sanctions—held conscious not only by affirmative references in practically every solemn public utterance, but also maintained by an ever growing literature—it will be found that Americans in general are quite unaware that the leadership idea is a particular characteristic of their culture. Since the leadership concept—though, with a quite different import—has recently become associated with fascism and nazism, it is understandable that Americans regularly show a marked reluctance to admit the fact even when it is pointed out by the observer.

What Americans display in their demand for leadership are primarily the general traits of their culture which may be referred to as individualism and romanticism. The ordinary American has a liking for the personal and the dynamic in collective activity, a longing for the uniquely human, the unexpected, the adventurous. He wants changes, and he likes to associate them with new faces. He hopes for individuals to step out of the mass, to find the formulas for directing the course of events, to take the lead. And he is prepared to create room for the exceptional individual's initiative. He is willing to gamble quite a bit on his choice. Not least important in his attitude toward the "outstanding" person is the inclination to be hopefully experimental. James Bryce observed:

I doubt if there be any country [except the United States] where a really brilliant man, confident in his own strength, and adding the charm of a striking personality to the gift of popular eloquence, would find an easier path to fame and power, and would exert more influence over the minds and emotions of the multitude. Such a man, speaking to the people with the independence of conscious strength, would find himself appreciated and respected.

In retrospect the American becomes rather pronouncedly a hero-worshiper. He usually conceives of the American Revolution as the deed of a group of



outstanding, courageous and resourceful individuals. The Republic has its "Founding Fathers," such as few other democratic nations have. In fact, the American dramatizes and personifies the entire history of his country and of the world. Social changes are rarely looked upon as the outcome of broad trends and deep forces. The long toils and seemingly blind moves of anonymous masses are pushed into the background of his world view.

Like no other people, Americans have continually succeeded in creating popular heroes—national, local and professional. Outstanding individuals may become heroes while they are still living. In no other part of Western culture is it less true that "no one is a prophet in his own country and his own time." A rising leader in America has quite commonly the backing of his home town and his own group: the American ideas of "favorite son" and "local boy who made good" are significant indications of this trait of American culture.

American individualism and romanticism have, in this particular respect, a personality basis to operate upon, which, for want of a better term, we shall call "personal generosity." On the average, Americans show a greater kindness and patience with others than Europeans do. This attitude is a natural product of the opportunities on the frontier and, more generally, in a rapidly expanding economy. Americans worship success. This peculiarity has been the object of their own and others' ironical and often scornful comments. What has less often been pointed out is that this success cult in America is not particularly self-centered; instead it is generous. *Usually it is not in his own but in other persons' success that the ordinary American rejoices and takes pride.* He identifies himself with those who succeed. He is inclined to "jump on the bandwagon," as the American expression runs, to "be on the winning side."

Americans have thus come to develop an unmatched capacity for vicarious satisfaction in watching others fight. The immense and agitated crowds of spectators, who can always be counted on to fill the stadiums when a hard struggle is staged, testify to this, as does also the manner in which international and national news is presented by press and radio to suit the American public. In America, as everywhere else, ninety-nine out of a hundred do not "succeed," of course—or "succeed" only if the standards are set low. But the extraordinary fact is that these ninety-nine less successful individuals in America, when they see their own hopes disappointed and their ambitions thwarted, are less likely than similar individuals in other countries to retreat into sour chagrin. The individual who is rising in America is not held back much by the mortification of his fellows and compeers. Occasionally he may even be pushed ahead.

Let us not be misunderstood. Of course there is personal envy in America, too. But there has been decidedly less of it than in the more static, less "bound-

less" civilizations of the Old World. Luck, ability and drive in others are more tolerated and less checked in America. Climbing is more generally acclaimed. Leadership is more readily accepted.

## 2. "COMMUNITY LEADERS"

So it becomes more natural, and more possible, in America, to associate the dynamic forces of society with individuals instead of with masses. In the Negro problem it is evident to the observer that the "community leaders" are given an astonishingly important role. When the white people want to influence Negro attitudes or behavior in one direction or another—to get the Negro farmers to plant a garden around their shacks, to screen their windows, to keep their children in school, to cure and prevent syphilis, to keep Negroes more respectful to the whites, to prevent them from joining trade unions, and to frighten them against "outside meddlers" or "red" seducers—the natural device (besides the long-range one of "education") is to appeal to the "community leaders." These leaders are expected to get it over to the Negro masses, who are supposed to be rather passive.

There are . . . special reasons in the caste situation for this practice. But more fundamentally *this is a common American culture pattern*. Caste accentuates it, but in the sphere of the Negro problem both whites and Negroes display a general attitude toward leadership and followership which permeates the entire American nation. It is incorrect to discuss Negro leadership except in this general setting. If we should study Negro leadership as an isolated phenomenon, we should be inclined to ascribe to the Negro people certain cultural characteristics which are simply American. Actually the Negro, in this as in so many other respects, because of the peculiar circumstances in which he lives, is an "exaggerated American."

For in all America it is assumed that every group contains leaders who control the attitudes of the group. Everywhere—not least in idealistic pursuits—the method of reaching a goal is assumed to be the indirect one of first reaching the leaders and, through them, influencing the masses. The leaders are organized locally in civic clubs of all sorts, and they are conscious of their role. They create a "public opinion," the peculiarity of which becomes apparent when, for instance, it is said about a strike which has failed, in spite of the fact that practically all the workers—making up the majority of the population—participate, that "local opinion did not favor the strikers," or even more explicitly that "public opinion suppressed the strike."

## 3. MASS PASSIVITY

The other side of this picture is, of course, the relative inertia and inarticulateness of the masses in America. The remarkable lack of self-generating, self-disciplined, organized people's movements in America is a significant historical fact usually overlooked by American historians and social scientists.

The new continent has always offered fertile soil for "isms," including every possible "European-ism" and, in addition, a great variety of homegrown ones. Communist societies have been built by Shakers, Rappites, Zoarites, True Inspirationists, and other sects, and by secularized Owenites and Fourierists. The Mormons experimented with polygamy, as well as with communism, and the Oneida Community with idealistic unchastity. Fantastic slogans of easy money and cheap credit, "ham and eggs," "thirty dollars every Thursday," "share the wealth," "every man a king," have inflamed local sections of opinion and startled the world.

America has had its full share of utopians and idealists, and much more than its due of charlatans and demagogues. America is also the country of countless associations. For every conceivable "cause" there is at least one association and often several. De Tocqueville and Bryce observed this, and it is true today. Americans in the upper and middle classes are great "joiners" and "supporters" of all sorts of schemes for the common good. If a proposal makes sense to people, their participation and purse can be counted on. But somehow the associations seldom reach down to the masses of people. In spite of all this lively organizational activity, America has had few protracted zealous movements among the people. There has frequently been popular unrest among farmers and workers in America; they have been dissatisfied and have dimly felt the need of one reform or another. Occasionally there have been bloody clashes: resort to violence both by employers and by workers in settling labor disputes had, until recently, been rather characteristic of America. Undoubtedly a general influence on the course of national and local politics has been exerted by the masses through democratic elections. But for some reason these forces, working in the masses, have seldom crystallized into orderly mass organizations.

The trade union movement is one of the oldest in the world, but in America it has always been comparatively inconsequential. Even with the active support of the federal government during the 'thirties, instituting protective legislation unmatched in other democratic countries, it has not even reached the size of the peak unemployment.<sup>1</sup> The observer is struck by the importance

<sup>1</sup> The top estimate of union membership in 1940 was 9 million. Estimates of peak unemployment in 1933-1935 ranged between 10 and 14 million.

played by salaried "organizers" and the relative unimportance of, or often the lack of, a spontaneous drive from the workers themselves. There has never been much of a cooperative movement in America. Often cooperatives are still petty neighborhood organizations based on the activity of the individual idealists—the "leaders"—more than on the concerted effect of cold economic reasoning and of the desire for independence and economic power on the part of the mass of consumers. The diverse activities collectively known as "adult education" in America are often laudable strivings to disseminate education among the common people by universities, philanthropic organizations, state and federal agencies, radio companies, or groups of enlightened community leaders. There is still little concerted drive for self-education in civic affairs. There is no spontaneous mass desire for knowledge as a means of achieving power and independence.

The passivity of the masses in America is, of course, a product of the nation's history. The huge immigration through the decades has constantly held the lower classes in a state of cultural fragmentation. They have been split in national, linguistic, and religious sub-groups, which has hampered class solidarity and prevented effective mass organization. Folk movements require close understanding among the individuals in the group, a deep feeling of common loyalty, and even a preparedness to share in collective sacrifices for a distant common goal. Only on a basis of psychological identification with the interest group is it possible to ask the individual to renounce his own short-range interests for the group's long-range ones. The immigrants have felt social distance to other lower class persons with different cultural origin. Also because they have difficulty in communicating with other Americans, immigrants have had to have leaders for this purpose. Bent on accommodation to social and economic pressure and on individual climbing, they have been conditioned to be even more individualistic than the native Americans.

The open frontier<sup>2</sup> and the relatively good prospects for every able and energetic individual to rise out of the lower classes kept down social discontent. Perhaps even more important, this social mobility drained the masses in every generation of most of their organizational catalysts. Few potential "leaders" remained in the lower classes to stimulate their loyalty and to organize their resistance against pressure. Since American industry was organized as it was, it required no sinister intention of the industrial executive to promote the rising labor leader to personnel expert or labor manager to the great advantage of the enterprise, but at the expense of weakening the energy of the

<sup>2</sup> Pioneer communities also had to depend heavily on leaders to maintain law and order, and these leaders have often remained after the legal order was more firmly established.



workers. The way into independent business was even more open. If the workers wanted to keep a man under these circumstances, they had to give him a salary which raised him much above their economic and social level.<sup>3</sup> A similar process worked on the potential organizers of cooperatives, farmers' movements and, indeed, every germ of concerted action on behalf of the lower classes in America.

Cultural fragmentation, the division of interest of the lower classes, and their loss of leaders, thus stamped the masses with inertia. They are accustomed to being static and receptive. They are not daring, but long for security. They do not know how to cooperate and how to pool risks and sacrifices for a common goal. They do not meet much. They do not organize. They do not speak for themselves: they are the listeners in America. They seldom elect representatives from their own midst to Congress, to state legislatures or to city councils. They rather support friendly leaders from the upper strata, particularly lawyers. Labor politics in America has constantly held to the common minority pattern of supporting parties and individual candidates who favored them and of assailing candidates who opposed them. Labor has never—except in a few localities—successfully sought political power for itself. It has never seriously tried to plan to utilize its large potential share of the electorate to capture the government of the country. Farmers' politics has, in the main, followed the same minority scheme. Farmers' organizations in America have constantly been in danger of being run by the small top group of big farmers, who, most of the time, have different interests from the mass of small farmers. Generally speaking, the lower classes in America have been inarticulate and powerless.

This is the more striking when the lower classes are compared with the "Pullman class," which had greater cultural homogeneity, more self-confidence, and more of a tendency to pool its power than a similar class in most other countries. There are closer ties and a more easy understanding between upper class persons in the various professions and businesses in this country than anywhere else. They travel more than in other countries. . . . They meet constantly for conferences. They are accustomed to being dynamic and courageous and to taking big risks. They know how to cooperate and even how to sacrifice for a common cause. They feel responsibility for the whole nation, as they view its interests, partly because they usually have a long line of American ancestry. The "Pullman class" has been fairly open to talent from below and has contained a disproportionate amount of the nation's brains and cour-

<sup>3</sup> In no other democratic country is the salary scale of trade union officials so differentiated and the higher brackets so high, compared with workers' income, as in America.

age. Its members have been willing and prepared to take the leadership made so easy for them by the inertia of the masses.

For judging future possibilities, it is important to note that the era of mass immigration has ended. The proportion of foreign-born white persons in the population is decreasing from decade to decade: it was 12.5 per cent in 1920, 10.9 per cent in 1930, but only 8.7 per cent in 1940. The other main factors behind the political inertia of the American masses—the open frontier and the easy escape out of the lower classes—are also disappearing. There is no longer any free land, and agriculture is depressed and likely to remain depressed. The modern organization of American industry is not favorable to small independent enterprise, and no lower class person can accumulate the huge capital necessary to start a large enterprise. The control of production from Washington during the present War is inevitably stepping up this movement to eradicate small independent business. The growth and improvement of education and the trend toward professionalization in all desirable occupations also has helped to eliminate the “self-made man” even in America. Ambitions for children are real, but they cannot compensate entirely for the lessened possibilities for climbing of the parents themselves.

The class barriers are thus becoming higher and more unyielding, at the same time as the cultural heterogeneity within those barriers is continuously decreasing. The masses receive a steadily improved general education and keep a greater number of their own potential leaders. These trends might make them active and articulate. For the time being, however, there are only minor indications of such a change. If and when it comes, it is destined to remake the entire public and social life of America.

The present observer is inclined to view the American pattern of individual leadership as a great strength of the nation, but the passivity of the masses as a weakness. These two cultural traits of America have, in their historical development, been complementary. But individual activity and mass activity are not necessarily antagonistic principles. It is possible to envisage a future development where the masses in America participate more intensively in political activities of various sorts, but where, nevertheless, outstanding individuals are permitted to have wide space for their initiative according to the great American tradition. Such a social system, if it ever developed, would realize in the highest degree the age-old ideal of a vitalized democracy. It would result, not only in a decrease in the immense class differences in America, but more fundamentally, it would effect a higher degree of integration in society of the many millions of anonymous and atomized individuals: a strengthening of the ties of loyalty running through the entire social fabric; a more efficient

and uncorrupted performance of all public functions; and a more intense and secure feeling on the part of the common citizen of his belongingness to, responsibility for, and participation in the commonwealth as a great cooperative human endeavor—a realization of a fuller life.

#### 4. THE PATTERNS EXEMPLIFIED IN POLITICS AND THROUGHOUT THE AMERICAN SOCIAL STRUCTURE

This is a dream—and a dream well in line with the ideals contained in the American Creed—but the American patterns of individual leadership and mass passivity are a reality that can be studied in all social spheres. They are, of course, particularly apparent in the political life of the nation. In both local and national politics the individual officeholder is—for the period he is in office—awarded much more power than he would be in democratic European nations. What is even more important, he is allowed and, indeed, expected to follow the inclinations of his personal drives and ideas much more unhampered by laws and regulations or particularly by continuous and democratic participation from the people.<sup>4</sup>

In local politics, America has, on the whole, not spread political responsibility upon countless citizens' boards, as have, for example, the Northern European countries (including England), thereby widening political participation and making politics more anonymous and less dependent on outstanding leadership. Much more, not only of broad policy-making, but also of detailed decisions are, in America, centralized in the offices of salaried functionaries. *Political participation of the ordinary citizen in America is pretty much restricted to the intermittently recurring elections. Politics is not organized to be a daily concern and responsibility of the common citizen.* The relative paucity of trade unions, cooperatives, and other civic interest organizations tends to accentuate this abstention on the part of the common citizens from sharing in the government of their communities as a normal routine of life.<sup>5</sup> In this

<sup>4</sup> This is also closely related to the fact that the American political parties do not correspond closely to the broad divisions of ideals and interests among the people.

This American party system breaks up the natural groupings based on the ideals and interests of the American electorate. It can itself be explained only by taking the passivity of the masses into account. On the other hand, it results in elections being fought relatively much more over personalities than over programs, which, in its turn, enhances the importance of the personality of the individual candidates. Another effect is that citizens, in the masses, are not being trained to have systematic, consistent, and stable political ideas, which also is likely to make the electorate more easily moved by individual leaders. Again we see a social mechanism adhering to the principles of cumulative causation in a vicious circle.

<sup>5</sup> It should be observed that this American pattern of nonparticipation in government, the historical explanation of which we have hinted at above, does not have its roots in the American Creed. The development came to run contrary to the hopes of Thomas Jefferson. In his desire for a de-

essential sense American politics is centralized. The same is even more true of national politics.

The basic democracy, however, is maintained in spite of the extraordinary power awarded to the individual officeholders and the equally extraordinary lack of participation by the common citizens in the running of public affairs. While American democracy is weak from the aspect of the citizens' sharing in political action and responsibility, it is strong in the ultimate electoral controls. And there is logic in this. Several elements of what, from the other side of the Atlantic, looks like "exaggerated democracy" in American measures of popular control may be explained as having their "function" in preserving for the common man the ultimate political power in this system of government where he participates so little in its daily duties.<sup>6</sup> It is this trait which prevents the delegation of such tremendous power to leaders and the hero worship from degenerating into fascism.

Americans have thus such "exaggerated" democratic devices as frequent elections, long ballots (so that even minor officers can be elected), the initiative and referendum, short terms of office, prohibitions against running for a second or third term. The intensive and ruthless publicity focused upon all officeholders—which does not even spare their private life—serves the same "function" of making officeholding precarious. Finally, the American system of "checks and balances" has not only gone into the federal and state constitutions but has become deeply entrenched in the American attitude toward all power problems even outside politics proper. Americans are inclined to give not only much power but *overlapping power* to two or more officials or agencies and then leave it up to them to work out a *modus vivendi* through cooperation, mutual hamperings and occasional stalls.

centralized government there was an expectation of the growth of a close and never ceasing democratic collaboration in community affairs. John Dewey has recently pointed out:

"His project for general political organization on the basis of small units, small enough so that all its members could have direct communication with one another and take care of all community affairs was never acted upon. It never received much attention in the press of immediate practical problems." (*Freedom and Culture* [1939], p. 159.)

<sup>6</sup> The great political power awarded the President of the United States is prescribed in the Constitution. But this is a formal explanation. The head of the state in other countries also often has, according to the constitutions, great powers, which in the course of development he has not been allowed to retain. In America it has fitted well into the general leadership pattern to let the President retain this great power. But he is elected by popular vote—the device for indirect election provided in the Constitution broke down nearly at the beginning. And—most important from our viewpoint—it became the tradition to restrict the period of office to two terms. Both the power concentration in the Presidency and the restriction of the power period to eight years are a direct outflow of the common American attitude of leadership. Contrariwise, the actual development of this central conspicuous power institution in American politics has undoubtedly had its influence in molding attitudes in all other political spheres and in the entire American culture.



The Roosevelt administration, with all its duplication of offices for the same or similar functions, exaggerates only somewhat an American tradition. In a lesser degree this is a trait which runs through the whole gamut of social institutions in America.

To the foreign observer this American pattern of power control, built upon systematic friction and actual competition of competent people, looks sometimes not only cumbersome but wasteful of energy and dangerous to reasonable efficiency of government. In a system where such extraordinary powers are constantly being delegated to the functionaries and where so little is held for the participation of the common men, this device, like the others mentioned, serves the "function" of keeping the executives within popular control. For when competing holders of power come in conflict and eventually stall, the ultimate arbiter is the electorate at the next election. It is to this arbiter—and, in advance, to "public opinion"—that they plead when they are in danger of getting stuck.

The patterns of strong and competitive personal leadership and weak followership, which we have exemplified for politics, permeate the entire social structure. In most of these other fields the popular check on the system—that is, the strong electionary system—is much weaker. This gives much greater power to leaders. In large sectors of the labor union movement it is thus a problem of how to avoid complete boss rule and how to preserve that minimum of democracy which consists in the leaders' being regularly elected and having to report to meetings of the common union members. When in recent years the question of industrial unions *versus* craft unions finally was brought before the public, it appeared as a fight between William Green and John L. Lewis. Cooperatives, when they infrequently managed to get securely established in America, often degenerated into ordinary business partnerships. Universities in America have never been controlled by the professors but by their presidents—not elected by the professors—and their appointed deans, subject to the control of boards of trustees who are outside and above the university. In modern business corporations in America, shareholders have lost their power to directors and other "insiders." Even in small groups—civic committees, research projects, or Sunday schools—the same pattern prevails: the leaders run the show, the masses are passive except for an occasional election.

The general public interest in personalities and in short-run developments manifests itself in government and business as well as in other phases of life. In Washington and in Wall Street, as well as in the other American centers of power control, the perspective is predominantly that of actual happenings yesterday and tomorrow and of individual persons in the spotlight: What

effect will this minor event have? What one person is behind what other person? What idea has caught whom?

One earlier observation should be reiterated. The idea and reality of leadership is not an object for much reflection in America; indeed, it is almost not part of conscious knowledge. There is no popular theory to explain it or justify it. It is not a fortified and preached ideology like the American Creed.<sup>7</sup> Not only the unsophisticated common citizens but also the social scientists have observed these facts without much questioning or evaluation. The patterns of leadership and followership simply exist as things which are a matter of course. They have not yet been detected to be important problems. . . .

<sup>7</sup> There is, of course, much emphasis on character building and training for leadership in America. But it is not recognized openly that there can be only a few leaders and the desire for a few trained leaders is not organized into an ideology or popular theory.

## JULIAN H. FRANKLIN

**J**ULIAN H. FRANKLIN (b. 1925), who wrote the following essay especially for this volume, is an instructor of public law and government at Columbia College. He is a native of New York City, received his education for the most part in New York, and is now completing his doctorate at Columbia University. Mr. Franklin's major interest is political theory. His approach to bureaucracy and to political theory in general has been influenced by his teacher, the late Franz L. Neumann.



### *BUREAUCRACY AND FREEDOM*

#### I. BUREAUCRACY AND THE MODERN STATE

Bureaucracy may be formally defined as the organization of administrative tasks according to the principles of hierarchy, formality of procedures, and professionalism. Hierarchy is the arrangement of authority in a single ladder of command so that all innovations of policy may be set at the apex of the pyramid and transmitted downward to the base. Formality of procedures means the establishment of written rules or binding precedents so that, barring innovations from outside, administrative conduct will always be predictable. And professionalism is the recruitment and payment of personnel solely on the basis of their ability to do the job in order to eliminate any incompatibility between their public and their private obligations. These characteristics always tend to go together—for there can be no effective chain of command where jurisdictions are confused or where personnel is independent, nor can procedures and personnel be stabilized unless the organization of functions is geared not to the idiosyncrasies of individuals or situations but to some permanent structure of command. The underlying purpose of bureaucracy, therefore, is to deprive the administrative staff of policy-making or discretionary power, to routinize administrative decisions, and thereby to maximize the power of the person or group that is the legal owner of the social institution. From this point of view, that is, the standpoint of the owner or the sovereign, bureaucracy is undoubtedly the most efficient and most “rational” administrative system.

Bureaucracy is so characteristic of the modern state that it is often confused with administration generally. However, bureaucracy does not and cannot exist at all levels of political society. It is in fact almost completely peculiar to the modern political system which first emerged in Europe, and particularly in France and Prussia, with the destruction of medieval feudalism. The significance of bureaucracy can be fully understood only if examined in this context.

In the Middle Ages the power of the state was dissolved into a network of private rights and obligations, personal in the case of feudal benefices, collective in the case of chartered towns. The king's right to exact military service, financial contributions, and political aid was restricted by the terms of the benefice or charter. If he wished to change these obligations he had to ask the consent of his retainers assembled in estates-general or parliaments. And even over those things to which he was entitled, the king often could not exercise his claims directly. By law or custom the jurisdiction of a lord or township might become "immune" from the direct intervention of the royal agent.

This is not to say, of course, that the classical idea of a single sovereign was totally extinguished in the Middle Ages. The inheritance of Roman law perpetuated the notion that all power resided in the people and that where that power had been conferred upon a prince his will, in turn, was absolute. This tradition also continued as a living force in the organization and law of the Roman church. But the actual power of the king extended only to those of his estates which had not been beneficed or chartered, and which he was therefore entitled to control directly. There was, moreover, little distinction between the king's government as a sovereign or public authority and the administration of a feudal patrimony. The yield of private estates, feudal tributes, and the income from public taxation were reckoned together in the royal treasury. The king's council was merely a conclave of his household, including, along with the members of his family, glorified domestic servants, with names like keeper of the royal bedchamber, who might be entrusted with administrative duties. The king's estates were supervised by another set of servants often called provosts, bailiffs, or seneschals with little distinction between their public and their private functions. Since the servants and members of the family were rewarded with grants of land and privileges, they too became quasi-feudal authorities escaping from direct control.

In the medieval system, therefore, political power not only was exercised by private persons but belonged to them. The king had neither the power nor the administrative instruments to enforce his will directly on his subjects.

The revival of a money economy, the growth of trade, and the rise of a



middle class committed to effective central government doomed the medieval system. From the thirteenth to the seventeenth century a resurgent monarchy gradually established a monopoly of power which it called its "majesty" or "sovereignty." The castles of the lords were razed and their private armies were disbanded; the feudal and communal courts were either subordinated or abolished; the estates of the realm were dismissed and rarely reconvened. In short, all those autonomous bodies which had formerly mediated between the king and the individual subject were systematically expropriated. The major outcome of this political revolution was the new administrative system called bureaucracy.

The legal basis of the new regime was that the king was the absolute proprietor of governmental functions and that his title was therefore imprescriptible. The king might sell the appointment to an office; he might lease or "farm" its income to the highest bidder; he might confer this income as a prebendary gift in return for administrative service. But in none of these cases did he alienate the office as a property. The venalized appointment, the "farm," and the prebend conferred no hereditary usufructs. What is more, they were only transitional steps towards a completely new type of public office far more advantageous to the crown. In France the most sensitive posts, and in Prussia almost every governmental function, were entrusted to salaried employees appointed and dismissed at the pleasure of the king. Such officials were unlike the feudal vassal since they had no private claims to power; they were unlike the royal "domestic" servant since they were not bound to the person of their master. They were simply agents in a public sense, charged by the king with the conduct of specific public functions. In this they were already "bureaucrats."

In the new administration, moreover, not only was the agent bound to his duties by the law, but his discretion was institutionally restricted. Each official, the king alone excepted, was under the command of a superior. He therefore acted only on orders from above, and the superior could, if authorized, suspend or resume the powers of subordinates in order to enforce compliance. This was the bureaucratic principle of hierarchy or ladder of command, and it was buttressed by the equally bureaucratic principle that administrative functions should be routinized. In Prussia, where this system was most completely effected, the duties of every office were reduced to written rules. Each official was required to submit written records of his acts which not only enabled superiors to check up on them but could be enforced as binding precedents. The Prussian king, moreover, maintained a special staff of spies called *fiscales* to see that regulations were rigidly observed. He might even

descend upon officials unannounced and flog them with his own hand for derelictions. Aside from these Draconian remedies, the whole pattern of modern bureaucratic discipline was already evident in early eighteenth-century Prussia.

Finally, the overriding consideration in the recruitment of the new officials was their allegiance to the public service. In Prussia the ruling class was early transformed into a nobility of royal service. But in France, where a semi-feudal opposition still survived among the landed aristocracy, the most important officials were recruited from the bourgeoisie, whose interests were congenial to the absolutist program. The aim, however, was not to elevate a class. It was rather to exploit the fact that the bourgeois depended on office for his prestige and frequently for his income, so that his allegiance tended to be more permanent. The bourgeois was more likely also to possess the legal and financial skills required by the royal administration. It was in Prussia, however, that these principles were turned into a conscious system of recruitment. Here the candidate for office, nobleman as well as bourgeois, had to qualify through competitive examinations in law and political economy. The fledgling public servant was often required to serve on the king's estates in order to acquire administrative experience. The established official might expect his career to be for life so long as his behavior was exemplary. The son of an official was encouraged to follow the profession of his father in order to perpetuate *esprit de corps*. Royal service thus became a total life-commitment. The social basis of the new bureaucracy was a corps of professional administrators who lived off and for their jobs.

Max Weber has suggestively compared this bureaucratization of political power to the process of economic expropriation which created capitalist production. The medieval knight owned the instruments of power much as the medieval artisan owned his tools. The bureaucratized official, on the other hand, was divorced from the instruments of administration and became dependent on their owner, just as the propertyless worker became economically dependent on the capitalist. Hence feudal tenure of power as a private right was replaced by public powers; medieval autonomy in the exercise of power was replaced by the performance of functions by command; and aristocracy as a monopoly of political service by a particular social class was replaced by a corps of professional officials who severed their connections with specific interests. In contrast to any political system in which political and social power are legally identified, bureaucracy marks the emergence of political power as a specialized social institution. This is the sociological definition of the modern state.

Bureaucracy, moreover, was the foundation of the modern state ideologically as well as sociologically. Strictly speaking the political theory of the new regime was autocracy, the rule of arbitrary will. But in fact the imperatives of the bureaucratic instrument—the precise definition of administrative jurisdictions, the routinization of procedures, the stabilization of the hierarchy, and the professionalization of personnel—tended to channel the discretion of the king and to make it a public institution. In France the decrees of king-in-council, not his arbitrary dictates, became the normal form of legislation. In Prussia the king called himself “the first servant of the State” and actually shouldered a crushing public obligation. Hence, although Louis XIV may well have said “L’état c’est moi,”<sup>1</sup> the monarchy itself was gradually bureaucratized. The kingship was increasingly justified not by the law of private property but by the service which it rendered to the public. Thus, in contrast to what went before it, the ideology of the bureaucratic state was “representative.” In the theory of enlightened despotism, the state was regarded as a common possession “representing” universal interests.

## II. BUREAUCRACY AND DEMOCRACY

The political upsurge of the middle classes at the beginning of the nineteenth century did not reverse the bureaucratic trend begun by royal absolutism. On the Continent at least the bourgeoisie was too weak and too isolated to rule solely by consent of the community. It required a strong and efficient executive to repress any challenge from the masses. And it required that the executive be neutral and predictable to meet the legal conditions of a free economy. In France the most enduring result of the revolutionary period was the purge of feudal remnants encumbering the old administration. In Prussia the middle classes accepted the grant of administrative reform in lieu of democracy itself. In all Continental countries the aim of the middle classes was to perfect bureaucracy, not supplant it.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Hegel, whose *Philosophy of Right* is the most profound statement of the middle-class idea of constitutionalism, should have asserted the representative function of bureaucracy not only against the king but against parliament as well. The king or chief of state in a constitutional democracy, he argued, represents the state as a concrete personality. But he must be restricted to symbolic functions. If he exercises governmental powers the state degenerates into arbitrary will or “tyranny.” Parliament, on the other hand, seeks to represent the common basis among

<sup>1</sup> The traditional translation *I am the state* fails to convey the force of the equation intended, namely, “The state is nothing but myself.”

the competing social interests of which it is composed. But it must be excluded from specific acts of government and restricted to the enactment of general laws if the state is to be truly universal. For Hegel, therefore, the executive function, the application of the general law to specific situations, becomes the mediating or synthesizing moment of the state. The executive is bureaucratically organized in order to ensure that in performing this function, it shall represent the universal interest. The duties of each office must be fixed "objectively"; the variety of particular services must "converge" hierarchically toward a unified purpose; and above all the officials must be trained to take the public interest as their own.

What the service of the state really requires [says Hegel] is that men shall forego the selfish or capricious satisfaction of their subjective ends; by this very sacrifice they acquire the right to find satisfaction in, but only in, the dutiful discharge of their public functions. In this fact, so far as public business is concerned, there lies the link between universal and particular interests which constitutes both the concept of the state and its inner stability.

In England the gap between the landed gentry and the bourgeoisie was never as profound as on the Continent, and the ability of the middle classes to accommodate their social interests to aristocratic political leadership and to aristocratic forms of government made a bureaucratic state less necessary. The victorious struggle of Parliament, in the seventeenth century, against the absolutist pretensions of the Stuarts established an elected or co-opted body as the main focus of political representation. And Parliament, always jealous of the royal executive prerogative, preferred to entrust administrative functions to institutions resembling itself.

The execution of the law was given less often to an agent of the king than to an independent court of common law. Local government was entrusted not to "prefects" or "intendants" of the central power but, in the cities, was devolved upon elected borough councils and in the counties upon justices of the peace co-opted from among the local squires. Where central administration was clearly unavoidable, power was diffused among multi-membered boards and almost any appointment might be venalized. It was as though Parliament preferred to tolerate extreme ineptness and inefficiency in the administration rather than risk a challenge to its political supremacy. In any case the unity of the English state depended upon the declaration and interpretation of a common law by independent bodies rather than upon the rule of a bureaucratic hierarchy. This was the political basis of the English conception of self-government.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Continental writers find the term "self-government" so peculiarly "English" that they often use it untranslated when discussing British institutions.



Judicial review, the sovereignty of the states within the Federal union, and the direct democracy of the New England township show that the American people inherited and even further developed the common law and the ideal of local self-government. Moreover, the unique experience of making and remaking governments—at first in Federal and state constitutional conventions, then in the creation of temporary governments by frontier communities, and even today in the innumerable voluntary associations created and governed by a “nation of joiners”—has given the American people a capacity for self-government which never ceases to astound the European. The original notion of democracy in America was thus intensely antibureaucratic. Perhaps the most clearcut statement of “self-government” is still the reply of an Anti-federalist member of the Congress of 1789 to Hamilton’s proposal for an “energetic” executive:

The doctrine of energy in Government, as I said before, is the true doctrine of tyrants. . . . Energy of Government may be the destruction of liberty; it should not, therefore, be too much cherished in a free country. A spirit of independence should be cultivated. . . .

The liberty and security of our fellow-citizens is our great object and not the prompt execution of the laws. Indecision, delay, blunders, nay villainous actions in the administration of Government, are trifles compared to legalizing the full exertion of a tyrannical power.

Among the English-speaking peoples, therefore, bureaucracy and democracy were long regarded as antitheses. But this assumption never fully corresponded to realities. The political unity of both English-speaking countries owed much to the bureaucratic system—to the absolutism of the Tudors in England and to the central administration created by the Federalists in the United States. If the democracy of the early nineteenth century allowed this administration to decay and to corrupt, it never seriously intended to abolish it. The sale of offices and the spoils system served to check the bureaucratic principle and to bring the public service into disrepute. But there was no real attempt to transfer central administrative functions directly to the community.

The antibureaucratic attitude, moreover, was congenial only in the first half of the nineteenth century. The economy was more or less self-regulating and the relative isolation of the English-speaking countries made unnecessary either a standing or a conscript army. But by the end of the century the concentration of economic power, the growing conflict between capital and labor, and the intensification of imperialist rivalries forced an expansion of the state’s activity—in part under the pressure of democratic movements, and in part due to the demands of industry itself for economic stabilization. The re-

sult was the creation of an administrative system intervening directly in society. In this situation amateurism, inefficiency, and localism became threats to the democratic principle. By 1861 in England, even John Stuart Mill, the chief theorist of liberal democracy, was calling for the complete bureaucratization of English administration, a reform which was carried out in the main under the aegis of the Liberal Party. A quarter of a century later in his article, "The Study of Administration" (1887), Woodrow Wilson in America was demanding a similar reform which was promoted by the Progressive Movement. In both countries, therefore, the bureaucratization of the democratic state was accepted by the democrats themselves.

In the twentieth century democrats of all persuasions have tended to formulate the issue of bureaucracy as a problem in political control. How, they ask, can democracy, which seeks to channel power from below, accept an administrative hierarchy in which power is channeled from above? Wilson's answer, which is typical, is that democracy and bureaucracy are compatible because the latter need not be political. "The field of administration is a field of business." It "lies outside the proper sphere of politics." "Politics," says Wilson, quoting Bluntschli, "is thus the special province of the statesman, administration of the technical official." The conclusion, therefore, is that this separability of politics and administration enables democracy to control bureaucracy. The making of policy may be completely reserved to the traditional democratic institutions without impairing administrative efficiency. On the other hand, the bureaucracy, carefully deprived of political discretion, becomes a politically dumb and pliant tool in the hands of the democratic sovereign.

The bureaucracy, however, has always exercised, and under modern conditions increasingly exercises, a political discretion which makes this formula unworkable.

1. The oldest institution for controlling the administration is the ordinary courts of law. Under English common law the public agent is a private citizen commissioned to effect a certain task. If he acts, or threatens to act, against another individual *ultra vires*, or "beyond his powers," he may be sued for damages or enjoined from his intended act like any other private person. In principle, therefore, the agent is effectively responsible. The law that grants authority tells the agent what to do, and the courts are there to see that he obeys.

The difficulty, however, is that the law—while it may set the limits or jurisdiction of an agent—can never fully tell him what to do. The law, let us assume, has told an administrator to enforce the retail price of milk at a certain

level. He then discovers a storekeeper who offers a loaf of bread free with every quart. Is this an attempt to violate the law on milk or does it merely affect the price of bread, which is outside the administrator's powers? The agent has no choice but to use his own imagination, that is, to exercise discretion. The courts will have no choice but to accept his judgment unless they wish to pass upon the facts themselves, and thus usurp a jurisdiction that was granted to the agent. Such problems arise in every case because the law, no matter how narrow or specific, will always deal in generalities and because the facts of any particular case, however "normal," will always differ somewhat from the precedents. The normal administrative act—the application of the general principle to the concrete case—is therefore inherently discretionary. The legality of such decisions may be reviewed in courts. But the courts may not determine whether a discretionary act, technically valid under law, was done wisely or foolishly, effectively or ineffectively from the point of view of public interests. The review of actions *ultra vires*, therefore, deals only with the external limits of the administrative process, and it has become even less significant as wider and broader powers have been delegated.

There have been proposals to eliminate this "undesirable" discretion either by allowing the courts to review administrative findings of fact or by "judicializing" the administrative process itself. One answer is that the courts themselves are executive agencies which apply laws to concrete cases. Hence the expansion of their scope would change only the focus, not the existence, of discretion. A second answer is that judicial procedures are not necessarily more equitable. The politically independent and impartial judge, the presentation of evidence by adversary proceedings, and the evidential rules against "extraneous" considerations are most appropriate when social interests have been clearly defined in advance. But where the law requires spelling out, as in the field of economic regulation, it may be more appropriate and more equitable to society in general, to rely on a politically responsible expert who may consider the case before him on the broadest grounds of public policy. These are the essential reasons why the most thoughtful administrative lawyers have protested the judicialization of administrative procedures and judicial review of administrative determinations of fact as an undesirable rigidification of discretion.

2. The supremacy of the legislature over the bureaucracy is based upon the simple proposition that the legislature alone shall "make the law" and the bureaucrat shall merely execute it. The workability of this control depends, therefore, on the ability of the legislature to minimize the area of discretion involved in its enactments. This was possible in an earlier condition of society

when individual situations were less differentiated and the law could therefore be specific. But as society became more stratified and as economic power tended to become concentrated the area of discretion inevitably increased. In the eighteenth century, for example, a law against "unfair competition" could be relatively specific because all competitors were of approximately equal economic power. Administration then was mere enforcement. Today, however, a similar law must be adjusted to the needs of each specific industry and, in one like the automobile industry in the United States, to the needs of the four or five "competitors" who dominate it. Under these conditions administration means policy making. The legislature has enacted "fairness" as its general intention. But in fact it has delegated to the administrative agent the power to determine what "fairness" means.

In the twentieth century, therefore, the legislature has increasingly delegated power to the executive. In the United States, where such delegation is constitutionally proscribed, the Supreme Court has held that no delegation legally exists when the legislature sets a "standard" by which the administrative agent can be held accountable. Was the standard of "fair price" a check upon the O.P.A.? Are "the military and civil needs of the U.S.A." a real limit on the A.E.C.? Such "standards" merely disguise the delegation of authority. That the Supreme Court should countenance deception of this sort is the most striking indication of the problem of discretion. Were the court seriously to attempt to prevent Congress from delegating power to the executive, it would strike at and cripple the very condition of modern legislation.

The parliament, of course, may control the bureaucracy through its power to withdraw authority, to withhold money, or to conduct investigations. But it is doubtful whether the legislature can intelligently do much more than to supervise the honesty of administrative proceedings and their overall conformity to its policy intentions. The administrator is better able to interpret this policy for concrete situations. If the legislature intervenes directly, as it so often does in the United States, it may only tend to rigidify the exercise of discretion or to make partial and sporadic decisions under the influence of special interests. Worst of all, it will tend to undermine control by the political executive who is far better situated for the task of supervision.

3. Where the executive is responsible to parliament, as in the "cabinet" systems of Europe, the chiefs of the administration are a committee of the parliamentary majority. The existence of administrative power can then be frankly admitted and expanded, for those who exercise it must have the "confidence" of the legislature. This undoubtedly is the most effective method of control.

But even here there is still a question whether the political head of an ad-



ministrative department can really use his initiative in policy making against the wishes of his professional subordinates. These subordinates may not directly, or even deliberately, oppose or sabotage their chief. But the routinization of procedures will often lead them to regard the established administrative policy as the "only way" of doing things. They will attempt to present routine as a dictate of "administrative science," of "expert knowledge," quite apart from political considerations. The political chief will rarely possess, and may be unable in his comparatively brief tenure to acquire, the knowledge to contradict such "professional" advice. Only with the strongest of political mandates may he even dare to take the risk. For conservative parties, of course, this inertia is not a major problem. But under a regime which wishes to innovate, the acceptance of "administrative routine" may amount to political capitulation.

Administration, therefore, is not only a "field of business." It involves an element of political discretion that is constantly increasing. If the fate of democracy really depended on the separation of politics from administration, the cause of democracy would be hopeless. We should then have to accept the dictum of Michels's iron law of oligarchy or of Burnham's managerial revolution that the owners of political and social power are being expropriated by the managerial elites which operate the system. We should have to agree that democracy is either already a mere façade for the interests of this elite or that it is doomed to imminent destruction with the coming of a new "technocracy."

There is no evidence, however, that the bureaucracy in exercising power, can really use it in its own behalf. The privileges of bureaucrats and managers are not held as private property; their unity as a social group is constituted only by the similarity of vocational techniques; their very title to the exercise of power is the claim that they are neutral and impartial, that is, that they will use power in the interest of others. The bureaucracy, in other words, lacks the status, the cohesion, and the moral claims which characterize a ruling class. It is therefore doomed to be a subordinate element in the fight for social power. This is not to say that it may not play a revolutionary role in a period of social crisis. The German bureaucracy was handsomely rewarded by the Nazis for services rendered in the destruction of the Weimar Republic. The Soviet bureaucracy receives far greater material benefits from the Communist party than the class which is alleged to rule. And yet in a totalitarian regime the price of bureaucratic benefits is dependence on the political elite. The most dramatic evidence are the bloody administrative purges which up to now have been a regular feature of the Soviet regime.

Both hypotheses—the managerial revolution as well as Wilson's politics-administration formula—involve the formalistic error that the locus of decision-making functions is the test of political democracy. The bureaucracy need not be abolished or continuously controlled because its organization and composition are internal checks against the abuse of discretionary power. The real problem of democracy is to guarantee that the interests promoted by bureaucracy are those of society in general as opposed to those of a single social class. This problem is substantive, not formal.

### III. BUREAUCRACY AND SOCIAL CHANGE

The social problem of bureaucracy, theoretically viewed, is the tendency of any bureaucracy to reduce the exercise of discretion to routine. Written and established rules are the guarantee of its efficiency, cohesion, and neutrality. There is thus an inherent tendency to stabilize procedures, further promoted by the demand of private interests that administrative decisions should be made predictable. Routinization, however, does not eliminate discretion; it merely disguises the objects that it serves. Where the power to act has been granted, conformity to precedent or rule is a decision for the existing social order. In more technical language, the general rule is applied to concrete cases on the basis of a standard of normality or equity which reflects the *status quo*. Thus, every bureaucracy tends to be conservative. In contemporary society, where administrative regulation becomes ever more significant, bureaucratic inertia and "red tape" become barriers to social change.

The bureaucrats themselves need not be conscious of this choice. The conservatism of most bureaucracies cannot be fully explained by undemocratic features of recruitment, as for example, the preference for Junkers in the Prussian civil service or for graduates of Oxford and Cambridge in the British "administrative class." It is rather that the bureaucrat is trained to believe that his functions are really nonpolitical. He is an "expert" not a "politician." He is aloof from the arena of politics and performs his duties "without zeal or passion" for any social interest. There arises, therefore, a trained incapacity to conceive the social order other than it is, or rather a tendency to confuse the concrete *status quo* with the principle of order universally conceived.<sup>3</sup> As Karl Mannheim puts it:

The administrative, legalistic mind has its own peculiar type of rationality. When faced with the play of hitherto unharnessed forces, as for example, the eruption of

<sup>3</sup> The generally more "democratic" attitude of the American official may be traced to the fact that the American bureaucracy was built up in great part under the New Deal. Since World War II, however, it has become steadily more conservative.

collective energies in a revolution, it can conceive of them only as momentary disturbances. It is, therefore, no wonder that in every revolution the bureaucracy tries to find a remedy by means of arbitrary decrees rather than to meet the political situation on its own grounds. It regards revolution as an untoward event within an otherwise ordered system and not as the living expression of fundamental social forces on which the existence, the preservation, and the development of society depend. The juristic administrative mentality constructs only closed static systems of thought, and is always faced with the paradoxical task of having to incorporate into its system new laws, which arise out of the unsystematized interaction of living forces as if they were only a further elaboration of the original system.

In periods of social crisis, therefore, the bureaucracy may become hostile even to democratic forms. In Germany and Italy it allied itself politically to Fascist leaders who promised to uphold the "order" of the state.

Worst of all, these procedures and attitudes tend to spread throughout society. The bureaucratization of the business corporation, of the labor union, of the leisure organization, of almost every other form of private association has tended to stereotype their activities along existing lines. As they are more closely regulated these private bureaucracies are transformed into "semipublic" institutions and thus are ever more tightly geared into the system. As the number of "managers" increases, the white collar employee becomes the dominant social type. Like the political bureaucrat he is rootless and utterly disorganized outside his slot within the system. Thus society itself becomes conservative. It is frozen in existing molds and loses its capacity for spontaneous and creative adjustment. In periods of social crisis the price of this rigidity may be the total loss of social freedom. Fascist *Gleichschaltung*, the gearing of all social activities to the interests of the ruling elite, was but an unrestricted application of trends which existed in capitalist society.

Bureaucratic routine thus masks an arbitrary element which not only contradicts the program of democracy but even threatens democratic forms. It is time, therefore, to consider the Marxist argument that democracy cannot do the job, that freedom can be achieved only by the total destruction of the bureaucratic state.

For Marx the bureaucratic state is but the form of political repression peculiar to capitalist society. With respect to particular interests within the bourgeoisie it may be rational and neutral. For the proletariat, however, it is an area of arbitrary power which society is forbidden to control. As the bureaucracy continues to expand, adds Lenin, democratic institutions become ever less significant. The working class, therefore, must achieve its social goals by revolution. It must smash the state machine and establish a working class dictatorship on the basis of direct democracy. With the elimination of the last vestiges of capitalism, with the creation of a classless society,

specialized institutions of coercion will no longer be required. The state will "wither away." Administration, as Lenin puts it, will be the control of things and not of men.

The Marxist analysis correctly describes the historic relation of bureaucracy to the power of the middle classes, and yet this link need not be indissoluble. One may also agree that the growth of bureaucracy makes social change more difficult without admitting that the problem is insuperable. Democracy permits the working class to organize its power within the framework of capitalist society and to press its social goals. And the advent of the welfare state, and especially the experience of Scandinavian and British labor parties, does not suggest that the mere existence of bureaucracy makes peaceful social change impossible. On the contrary, democratic labor, when it comes to power, has tended to expand bureaucratic institutions as an instrument of social planning. And even if one were to accept the Leninist-Stalinist dictum that democratic socialism is the façade for a declining capitalism, the Marxist theory of bureaucracy gains little corroboration from the experience of Russia. The revolution of the Russian proletariat has not produced a stateless society. It has led instead to the most intense and pervasive bureaucratic system the world has ever known. It cannot be argued, therefore, that the bureaucratization of industrial society derives from the needs of any single social class.

There is no social reason, therefore, why bureaucracy need be a barrier to man's rational control of his environment. And yet in all societies, democratic as well as totalitarian, capitalist and socialist as well as communistic, the expansion of bureaucracy is accompanied by increasing regimentation. Must we assume, then, that the ultimate reason for bureaucracy is some permanent inability of human beings to live and work together without a system of coercion? This, at least, is the conclusion arrived at by Max Weber, who has made the most exhaustive studies of bureaucracies and has laid the foundations of contemporary bureaucratic theory. Spontaneity, in his opinion, is an act of faith or will evoked by the magic or charisma of a leader. But in order for charismatic authority to perpetuate itself it must be transformed into a disciplined routine. In this process the original spontaneity of the faith is gradually attenuated; and the routine survives from sheer inertia, being held together by the pressure of the material interests that tend to form around the system. For Weber, therefore, the polarity or antagonism of will and rationality, charisma and routine, is the driving force of history. The unending oscillation of these tendencies dooms the hope of spontaneity.

Routinization in the modern world, holds Weber, takes on proportions truly overwhelming. Science and technology, large-scale industry, the ethos of work,



have created a drive for the rationalization of human relations which pervades every aspect of society. This rationality is technical, not substantive. It has no relation to the desire of the individual freely to develop his capacities. It regards such desires as an "arbitrary" interference with the imperative of technical rationalization. The complete fulfillment of the system, therefore, bodes the crushing of every form of spontaneity. All that is left for man, says Weber pessimistically, is the forlorn hope of another Revelation.

If we accept this Weberian analysis we must then accept the nightmarish vision of society painted by his brother Alfred even before the outbreak of World War I. Free individuals, says Alfred Weber,

see how a gigantic "apparatus" arises in our midst, and how this apparatus increasingly lays hands on those parts of our existence which in an earlier time were in some sense free and natural, and how it absorbs them into its bureaus, compartments, and pigeonholes. They feel the radiation of a passion for schematization and rigidification which is utterly alien to individual, spontaneous life. They see how it replaces this life with a gigantic calculating Something, a system which spreads a dead routinization, an atomistic aggregation, and a soulless coordination over all creative work and activity. It may be comforting to say that one can escape within one's self, that, even enmeshed within the system, one can conquer it internally through spiritual resistance. But there remains the terrifying fact that people capitulate to the apparatus psychologically, that they crawl into its bureaus, departments, and pigeonholes seeking warm, convenient little places, and that they grovel before leaders who point the way from one of these warm places to another. The psyche, in other words, shrivels up in the longing to be taken care of, in the great hope of making a career within the apparatus.

We cannot agree, however, that the reason of man will always be antagonistic to the liberation of his will. The idea that instincts are inherently destructive and can only be repressed is a doctrine of original sin, although it is promoted in secular form by certain psychological determinisms. But this antithesis may be only historical, for, as Epicurus put it, "the pleasure which arises from nature does not produce wickedness, but rather the longing connected with vain fancy." It may well be, in other words, that antisocial wishes result not from any natural desire but from the fears and anxieties generated by repression of the libido. Such repression is no longer justified technologically or socially. If man could overcome his fears of freedom, and resist the elites which feed on his anxieties, the bureaucratic machine itself might provide the technical apparatus for the free satisfaction of the individual's wants. Society then would become an Epicurean pleasure garden accessible to every man. If one objects that the prospect is "utopian," it is well to note that the only other alternative is the system of total regimentation projected by anti-utopians like George Orwell.

## ROSCOE POUND

ALTHOUGH the "rule of law" is a fixed principle of a liberal democratic polity, the law itself is not static. The function of law is to provide grounds for adjudicating, along lines of tested principle, conflicting claims. Although this function remains constant, the relative weight accorded different sorts of claims, individual or social, necessarily changes. As Roscoe Pound (b. 1870), Dean Emeritus of the Harvard Law School, points out in the following selection, taken from an article first published in the *Harvard Law Review* (1943), the content of law is constantly being adjusted to the needs of society. According to this distinguished teacher and philosopher of jurisprudence, the thesis may be demonstrated in the gradual evolution of the idea of social interests, as distinguished from private interests, in the common law from the nineteenth century to the present. As society has grown more complex, and more vulnerable to the effects of institutional imbalance, there has been a tendency to regard individual claims in less rigid and less absolute terms than formerly, and to recognize more fully the claims of the general social interest.



### *A SURVEY OF SOCIAL INTERESTS*

There has been a notable shift throughout the world from thinking of the task of the legal order as one of adjusting the exercise of free wills to one of satisfying wants, of which free exercise of the will is but one. Accordingly, we must start today from a theory of interests, that is, of the claims or demands or desires which human beings, either individually or in groups or associations or relations, seek to satisfy, of which, therefore, the adjustment of relations and ordering of conduct through the force of politically organized society must take account. . . . As I should put it, individual interests are claims or demands or desires involved immediately in the individual life and asserted in title of that life. Public interests are claims or demands or desires involved in life in a politically organized society and asserted in title of that organization. They are commonly treated as the claims of a politically organized society thought of as a legal entity. Social interests are claims or demands or desires involved in social life in civilized society and asserted in title of that life. It is

---

This selection has been reprinted from Roscoe Pound, "A Survey of Social Interests," *Harvard Law Review*, Vol. LVII (1943), pp. 1-39 by permission of the publisher and of the author.

not uncommon to treat them as the claims of the whole social group as such.

But this does not mean that every claim or demand or desire which human beings assert must be put once for all for every purpose into one of these three categories. For some purposes and in some connections it is convenient to look at a given claim or demand or desire from one standpoint. For other purposes or in other connections it is convenient to look at the same claim or demand or the same type of claims or demands from one of the other standpoints. When it comes to weighing or valuing claims or demands with respect to other claims or demands, we must be careful to compare them on the same plane. If we put one as an individual interest and the other as a social interest we may decide the question in advance in our very way of putting it. For example, in the "truck act" cases one may think of the claim of the employer to make contracts freely as an individual interest of substance. In that event, we must weigh it with the claim of the employee not to be coerced by economic pressure into making contracts to take his pay in orders on a company store, thought of as an individual interest of personality. If we think of either in terms of a policy we must think of the other in the same terms. If we think of the employee's claim in terms of a policy of assuring a minimum or a standard human life, we must think of the employer's claim in terms of a policy of upholding and enforcing contracts. If the one is thought of as a right and the other as a policy, or if the one is thought of as an individual interest and the other as a social interest, our way of stating the question may leave nothing to decide.

In general, but not always, it is expedient to put claims or demands in their most generalized form, *i.e.*, as social interests, in order to compare them. But where the problems are relatively simple, it is sometimes possible to take account of all the factors sufficiently by comparing individual interests put directly as such. It must be borne in mind that often we have here different ways of looking at the same claims or same type of claims as they are asserted in different titles. Thus, individual interests of personality may be asserted in title of or subsumed under the social interest in the general security, or the social interest in the individual life, or sometimes from different standpoints or in different aspects, both of them. Again, individual interests in the domestic relations may be subsumed under the social interest in the security of social institutions of which domestic institutions are the oldest and by no means the least important. Again, the public interest in the integrity of the state personality may be thought of as the social interest in the security of social institutions of which political institutions are one form. When we have recognized the legally delimited and secured interest, it is important to identify

the generalized individual interest behind and giving significance and definition to the legal right. When we are considering what claims or demands to recognize and within what limits, and when we are seeking to adjust conflicting and overlapping claims and demands in some new aspect or new situation, it is important to subsume the individual interests under social interests and to weigh them as such.

Some years ago one of the justices of our highest Court, dissenting from the judgment of that Court in the *Arizona Employers' Liability Cases*, told us that there was a "menace in the . . . judgment to all rights, subjecting them unreservedly to conceptions of public policy." Undoubtedly if certain legal rights were definitely established by the Constitution there would be a menace to the general security if the Court which must ultimately interpret and apply the provisions of that instrument were to suffer a state legislature to infringe those legal rights on mere considerations of political expediency. But it was only the ambiguity of the term "right," a word of many meanings, and want of clear understanding of what our law has been seeking to achieve through the obscure conception of "public policy" that made it possible to think of the decision in question in such a way. The "rights" of which Mr. Justice McKenna spoke were not legal rights in the same sense as my legal right to the integrity of my physical person or my legal right of ownership in my watch. They were individual wants, individual claims, individual interests, which it was felt ought to be secured through legal rights or through some other legal machinery. In other words, there was a policy of securing them. The Fourteenth Amendment did not set up these or any other individual interests as absolute legal rights. It imposed a standard upon the legislator. It said to him that if he trenched upon these individual interests he must not do so arbitrarily. His action must have some basis in reason. It is submitted that that basis must be the one upon which the common law has always sought to proceed, the one implied in the very term "due process of law," namely, a weighing or balancing of the various interests which overlap or come in conflict and a rational reconciling or adjustment. Thus the public policy of which Mr. Justice McKenna spoke is seen to be something at least on no lower plane than the so-called rights. As the latter term refers to individual interests which we feel ought to be secured by law, the former refers to social interests which we feel the law ought to or which in fact the law does secure in delimiting individual interests and establishing legal rights. There is a policy in the one case as much as in the other. The body of the common law is made up of adjustments or compromises of conflicting individual interests in which we turn to some social



interest, frequently under the name of public policy, to determine the limits of a reasonable adjustment.

In the common law we have been wont to speak of social interests under the name of "public policy." Thus when a great judge was called on to weigh certain claims with reference to the social interest in the security of political institutions, he said that a "great and overshadowing public policy" forbade applying to the case one of the most fundamental principles of the law. Again, when it seemed to a majority of the Supreme Court of the United States that the validity of an acquisition from the Federal Government ought to be put at rest as against a claim of fraud, although limitation did not run against the Government, the Court spoke of the "policy" behind the statute of limitations and invoked the doctrine of election of remedies as expressing the same policy. So, too, when a great teacher of law wished to say that another fundamental legal doctrine was sometimes limited in its application because of the social interest in the general security, he stated that "except in certain cases based on public policy" the law of today makes liability dependent upon fault. But this limitation of the application of principles, or setting off of exceptions, on grounds of public policy, was felt to be something abnormal. The classical expression of this feeling is in the opinions of the judges in *Egerton v. Lord Brownlow*. Although the case was decided ultimately on the ground of public policy, the remarks of the judges have colored all subsequent judicial thinking on the subject. From the seventeenth century to the end of the nineteenth, juristic theory sought to state all interests in terms of individual natural rights. Moreover, the nineteenth century, under the influence of Hegel, wrote legal history as the unfolding in human experience of an idea of liberty, as an outcome of the clash of individual free wills, leading to the discovery of the invisible bounds within which each might realize a maximum of self-assertion. Thus for a time social interests were pushed into the background. It was said that public policy was "a very unruly horse, and when once you get astride it you never know where it will carry you." It was conceived that a court should be slow and cautious in taking public policy into account, and that if rules of law were to be limited in their application, or if exercise of individual powers of action was to be held down upon such grounds, the matter ought to be left to the legislature.

Questions of public policy came up in three forms: (1) in connection with the validity of contracts or similar transactions; (2) in connection with the validity of conditions in conveyances and testamentary gifts; (3) in connection with the validity of testamentary dispositions. Thus different social in-

terests were weighed against a policy in favor of free contract ("right" of free contract) and a policy in favor of free disposition of property which was taken to be involved in the security of acquisitions and to be a corollary of individual interests of substance (rights of property). Accordingly, distrust of public policy grew out of a feeling that security of acquisitions and security of transactions were paramount policies. "[If] there is one thing," said Sir George Jessel, "which more than another public policy requires it is that men of full age and competent understanding shall have the utmost liberty of contracting, and that their contracts . . . shall be enforced by Courts of justice."

In truth, the nineteenth-century attitude toward public policy was itself only the expression of a public policy. It resulted from a weighing of the social interest in the general security against other social interests which men had sought to secure through an overwide magisterial discretion in the stage of equity and natural law.

Thus the conception of public policy was never clearly worked out, nor were the several policies recognized by the common law defined as were the individual interests to which the juristic thought of the last century gave substantially its whole attention. The books are full of schemes of natural rights. There are no adequate schemes of public policies. Often the weighing of social interests is disguised by reasoning about "causation," or by the drawing of what seem on their face arbitrary distinctions. But three general types of policies are clearly recognized as such in the law books of the last century. First and most numerous are policies with reference to the security of social institutions. As to political institutions, there is a recognized policy against acts promotive of crime or violation of law—in other words, a policy of upholding legal institutions—and a policy against acts prejudicially affecting the public service performed by public officers. As to domestic institutions, there is the well-known policy against acts affecting the security of the domestic relations, or in restraint of marriage. As to economic institutions, there are the policy against acts destructive of competition, the policy against acts affecting commercial freedom, and the policy against permanent or general restrictions on the free use and transfer of property. Secondly, there are policies with reference to maintaining the general morals. Thus there is a recognized policy against acts promotive of dishonesty. Also there is a recognized policy against acts offending the general morals. Thirdly, there are policies with reference to the individual social life: a policy against things tending to oppression, and a policy against general or extensive restrictions upon individual freedom of action. Some of the policies with

respect to economic institutions suggest this same interest in the individual life.

In one way or another most of the social interests of which the law must take account today are at least suggested in the list of those recognized as policies in the common law. Yet one social interest which has governed the ideas of lawyers at all times and has played a controlling part in the thought of the immediate past is relatively little stressed as a policy. The social interest in the general security seems to have been thought of as something apart, as something involved in the very idea of law and entering into every legal relation as a necessary element. This appears clearly in nineteenth-century theories as to the end of law and in nineteenth-century juristic method.

Jurists of the last century thought of law as involving restraints on liberty which might only be justified so far as it was necessary in order to maintain liberty. Hence, they conceived that the legal order was to be held down to the minimum which was required to protect the individual against aggression and to secure the harmonious co-existence of the free will of each and the free will of all. But this is only a way of stating a paramount social interest in the general security in terms of individual liberty. Again, men strove zealously in the last century to insure complete security through absolute certainty and uniformity in judicial administration. When the eighteenth-century idea that these things might be attained through a complete and perfect code broke down, they sought to achieve them through a method of mechanical logical deduction from fixed legal conceptions. As this also broke down at many points, lawyers sought the same ends through universal definitions of absolute rights. But behind the quest of certainty and uniformity is their real end—the social interest in the general security. Attempts to administer justice with an eye solely to that one social interest have broken down because of the pressure of other social interests which it has proved impossible to ignore. Exclusive attention to security led jurists to seek abstract, universal, eternal adjustments or harmonizings of conflicting or overlapping interests which were too abstract to prove workable. We have learned slowly that it is the problem—namely, to satisfy human claims and demands and desires—that is constant, not the exact machinery of satisfying them. To go back to the illustration of the “truck acts,” in rural, pioneer, agricultural America there was no call to limit the contracts a laborer might make as to taking his pay in goods. To have imposed a limitation would have interfered with individual freedom of industry and contract without any corresponding gain in securing some other interest. On the other hand, in industrial America of the end of the nineteenth century, a regime of un-

limited free contract between employer and employee in certain enterprises led not to conservation but to destruction of values. It led to sacrifice of the social interest in the human life of the individual worker. Hence we began to put limits to liberty of contract between employer and employee and to require wages to be paid in money. It was inevitable that the statutes imposing these limits should be bitterly opposed by a generation which could only think of contracts of employment in terms of individual rights and security of transactions.

Not only did our thinking in the last century deceive itself in supposing that it was proceeding solely on the basis of individual liberty and individual rights deduced therefrom, it deceived itself quite as much in its interpretation of legal development. The conception that pressure of individual interests brought about state and law and fashioned legal institutions has no historical warrant. On the contrary, from the first, the controlling factor is the need of the social group to be secure against those forms of action and courses of conduct which threaten its existence. This paramount social interest is the first interest of any sort to be given legal recognition. It is not too much to say that law in the lawyer's sense of that term arose and primitive law existed simply to maintain one narrow phase of this interest, namely, the social interest in peace and order.

It must be borne in mind that juristic thinking became fixed to no small extent in the mold of the strict law. That mold was largely shaped by the circumstance that in its beginnings law was no more than a means toward the peaceable ordering of society, a regulative agency by which men were restrained and the general security was maintained. Law retains this character of a regulative agency and means toward peaceable ordering, although other functions and other ends become manifest as it develops. Thus the interests which were paramount while law was formative left their mark upon it and fixed the lines of legal thought. In the beginning, in order to establish a peaceable ordering of society, the legal order had to undertake two tasks. It had to regulate self-redress and ultimately to supersede it. It had also to prevent aggression. The simple program of primitive law deals only with assault, homicide, and larceny, which are causes of private war, and with impiety, which it was believed might cause interposition of the gods in the form of natural calamities. In the last century it was easy to say that the former (*i.e.*, giving a remedy for aggression) is private law, the securing of individual interests, while the latter (*i.e.*, putting down impiety) is criminal law—the securing of social interests as such. It is true that putting down private war grew into private law, and in the eighteenth and nineteenth



centuries we came to think of it in terms of individual interests only. When self-redress and private war had been put down for centuries, men saw only that the legal order prevented aggression, that it prevented or repaired infringements of individual interests. In primitive society, however, the chief significance of aggression on individuals was that it was certain to lead to private war. Where only the interests of the individual were involved we have another story. As such primitive law ignores him. It was only the free man, head of a household and able to disturb the peace of society, who had standing in the old Roman law to call upon the law for redress. In a society in which groups of kindred are the significant element, a wrong involves much more than the mere injury to John Doe or Richard Roe. In the stage of the strict law men have discovered how to secure the social interest in peace and order by means of legal remedies given to injured individuals.

In a later stage of legal development, the individual human being, the moral unit, becomes the legal unit, and the law seeks to transmute his moral duties into legal duties. In the maturity of law, legal rights are put behind the duties and remedies and orderings and appear to be the ultimate ends for which the legal order exists. It was natural, in that period of legal development, to write legal history from an abstract individualist standpoint and to interpret it as a working out of restrictions upon individual aggression in order to secure individual freedom of action. On the contrary, individual freedom of action as an end is something which came into juristic thinking in modern times, as we began to be conscious of a social interest in the individual human life. Individual legal rights were worked out in the endeavor to maintain the social interest in the general security.

Thus the formal remedies of the strict law, the abstract individualist legal philosophy of the nineteenth century, the individualist interpretation of legal history by the historical jurists, in short, the whole training of the lawyer, led him to think of the legal order exclusively in terms of the general security and of the general security exclusively in terms of individual rights. When the social interest in the general security is to be weighed in the scale, the courts have had little difficulty. But when other social interests are involved, it has been usual to employ a vague conception of "policy," of which courts and lawyers are rightly mistrustful, since the policies are largely ill-defined and in their application have been felt to leave too much scope for the personal equation of the particular tribunal. Hence pressure of new social interests has given the courts pause and sometimes has led them to cast doubt upon the method of dealing with individual interests which consciously or unconsciously the law has always employed. Today, jurists are having to

consider all manner of problems arising from consciousness of new social interests, or at least from new phases of old ones. In contrast to nineteenth-century attempts to state the end of the legal order in terms of security of acquisitions and security of transactions, attempts have been made to state it in terms of the social interest in the individual life, or to value that interest along with the interest in the general security on which the last century insisted almost exclusively. Nor is this change confined to legal thought. Concrete individualization rather than abstract treatment is insisted upon today in every department of human activity. In law this means increased regard for the circumstances of the actual case and results in a continually increasing resort to administrative tribunals or to administrative methods. When we try to generalize the process for legal and judicial purposes, it appears as a conscious recognition of the social interest in the individual life. In criminal law we speak of a "socialized" punitive justice.

An important phase of the social interest in the individual life calls for security to free and spontaneous self-assertion and is connected easily with the juristic thought of the immediate past. But there are many conditions in the life of today in which other phases of this interest must come into account and may call for restrictions upon abstract self-assertion. Thus American legislation restricted the power of Indian allottees to dispose of the tracts allotted to them. British legislation limited the *jus disponendi*<sup>1</sup> of Irish tenants, suddenly turned into proprietors and without experience of economic freedom. Courts of equity avoided sailors' contracts, contracts with heirs and sales of reversions and expectancies, and agreements with debtors clogging their equity of redeeming mortgaged property where there was an economic pressure and only an abstract, theoretical freedom of contract. Back of these doctrines of equity was a dim recognition of a social interest of which we have come to be fully conscious. Today our statute books are full of such restrictions. We do not ask: What will promote the maximum abstract freedom of contract as an item of the general abstract freedom taken to be the end of law? We ask instead: Is it wise social engineering, under the actual social and economic conditions of the time and place, to limit free self-assertion, or what in appearance is free self-assertion, for a time in certain situations? Does it secure a maximum of our scheme of interests as a whole, with the least sacrifice, to leave persons in certain relations free to contract as they choose or as their necessities may seem to dictate, or should we rather limit what is not under actual conditions a free choice? Such a mode of thinking does not fit easily into the method of hard and fast conceptions on

<sup>1</sup> [*Right of disposal.*]

which the last generation relied to maintain the general security. A generation ago modern social legislation presented itself to the judicial mind as involving, on the one hand, a natural right of free contract, guaranteed by the Constitution as a part of liberty, and, on the other hand, a hard and fast conception of the police power of the state, defined in terms of public health, safety, and morals. Thus courts were not unlikely to reach an *impasse* and there were sure to be judicial dissents. The net result was to break down the method of conceptions, when used as a method of applying a standard, and to take account of an increasing number of social interests as such. In reality, the courts were using an ideal of the end of law as a measure of reasonableness or of "public purpose," since the "police power" was the power of the government to achieve its ends in ways not forbidden by the fundamental law established in the Constitution.

Perhaps enough has been said to show the practical importance of recognizing social interests as such, instead of thinking of policies, and of a more complete statement of them and a more adequate classification. Yet a satisfactory starting point for such a classification requires some consideration. A generation ago, as a matter of course, we should have relied upon logical deduction. We should have deduced the several social interests as presuppositions of generalized social existence. But schemes of necessary presuppositions of law or of legal institutions seem to me to be at bottom schemes of observed elements in actual legal systems, systematically arranged, reduced to their lowest terms, and deduced, as one might say, to order. I doubt the ability of the jurist to work out deductively, the necessary jural presuppositions of society in the abstract.

At one time it seemed that a more attractive starting point might be found in social psychology. One need only turn to the list of so-called instincts in any of the older social psychologies in order to see an obvious relation between interests, as the jurist now uses that term, or what we had been wont to call natural rights or public policies, on the one hand, and these "instincts" or whatever they are now called, on the other hand. Thus in McDougall's *Social Psychology* we used to find an instinct of repugnance and "predisposition to aesthetic discrimination." In jurisprudence we must consider a social interest in aesthetic surroundings which the law is beginning grudgingly to recognize. In McDougall we used to find an instinct of self-abasement, and in jurisprudence we must consider the so-called right of privacy. Again, to take so-called instincts with which the law has always had much to do, there is evident relation between the "instinct of pugnacity" and the law as to self-defense; between the "instinct of self-assertion" and the anxiety of the law

that the will of the individual shall not be trodden upon; between the "instinct of acquisition" and the individual interests of substance and the social interest in the security of acquisitions; between the "instinct of gregariousness" and loyalty and veracity as tendencies or habits connected therewith, and the social interest in the security of transactions. But in the last two decades, after a bitter controversy among sociologists and social psychologists, and redefinitions and substitute categories, most of what was accepted a generation ago in this connection has been pretty much given up. Certainly we can no longer build on McDougall's scheme and such definitions and classifications as are suggested today are remote from what we need in jurisprudence.

If we may not rely upon logical deduction nor upon a theory and classification of what were formerly called instincts, there remains a less pretentious method which may none the less be upon surer ground. If legal phenomena are social phenomena, observation and study of them as such may well bear fruit for social science in general as well as for jurisprudence. Why should not the lawyer make a survey of legal systems in order to ascertain just what claims or demands or desires have pressed or are now pressing for recognition and satisfaction and how far they have been or are now recognized and secured? This is precisely what has been done in the case of individual interests, in the schemes of natural rights, although the process has usually been covered up by a pretentious fabric of logical deduction. The same method may well be applied to social interests, and this should be done consciously and avowedly, as befits the science of today. It is true that objection has been made to this because the same social interest appears behind many legal institutions and doctrines and precepts, and legal institutions and doctrines and precepts almost always have behind them, not one social interest or a simple adjustment or compromise of two, but a complex harmonizing of many. Yet it is of the first importance to perceive this, to note what those interests are, to see how they are adjusted or harmonized or compromised, and to inquire why it is done in this way rather than in another. The first step in such an investigation is a mere survey of the legal order and an inventory of the social interests which have pressed upon lawmakers and judges and jurists for recognition.

In such a survey and inventory, first place must be given to the social interest in the general security—the claim or want or demand, asserted in title of social life in civilized society and through the social group, to be secure against those forms of action and courses of conduct which threaten its existence. Even if we accept Durkheim's view that it is what shocks the general



conscience, not what threatens the general security, that is repressed, I suspect that the general conscience reflects experience or superstition as to the general safety. A common-law judge observed that there would be no safety for human life if it were to be considered as law that drunkenness could be shown to negative the intent element of crime where a drunk man kills while intoxicated though he would never do such a thing when sober. It should be noted how the exigencies of the general security outweighed the traditional theory of the criminal law.

This paramount social interest takes many forms. In its simplest form it is an interest in the general safety, long recognized in the legal order in the maxim that the safety of the people is the highest law. It was recognized in American constitutional law in the nineteenth century by putting the general safety along with the general health and general morals in the "police power" as a ground of reasonable restraint to which natural rights must give way. In another form, quite as obvious today but not so apparent in the past, before the nature and causes of disease were understood, it is an interest in the general health. In another form, recognized from the very beginnings of law, it is an interest in peace and public order. In an economically developed society it takes on two other closely related forms, namely, a social interest in the security of acquisitions and a social interest in the security of transactions. The two last came to be well understood in the nineteenth century, in which they were more or less identified with individual interests of substance and individual interests in freedom of contract. Yet a characteristic difference between the law of the eighteenth century and the law of the nineteenth century brings out their true nature. Eighteenth-century courts, taking a purely individualist view, regarded the statute of limitations as something to be held down as much as possible and to be evaded in every way. Lord Mansfield in particular, under the influence of natural-law ideas and thinking of the statute only as an individual plea which enabled the individual interest of a plaintiff to be deprived of legal security, sought out numerous astute contrivances to get around its most obvious provisions. If one said, "I am ready to account, but nothing is due you," if he made provision in his will for the payment of his "just debts," if his executors advertised, notifying those who had "just debts" owing them to present their claims, in these and like cases it was held there was an acknowledgement sufficing to take a barred debt out of the statute. Modern courts came to see that there was something more here than the individual interests of plaintiff and defendant. They came to see that the basis of the statute was a social interest in the security of acquisitions, which demands that titles shall not be insecure

by being open to attack indefinitely, and a social interest in the security of transactions which demands that the transactions of the past shall not be subject to inquiry indefinitely, so as to unsettle credit and disturb business and trade. If we compare the French rule, *en tout cas de meuble possession vaut titre*,<sup>2</sup> with the Roman doctrine that no one can transfer a greater title than he has, if we note the growth of the idea of negotiability in the law everywhere, and in our law both by legislation and by judicial decision, we may see something of how far recognition of the social interest in the security of transactions went in the maturity of law.

Other examples of recognition of the security of transactions may be seen in the presumption as to transactions of a corporation through its acting officers, the stress which the courts put upon *stare decisis*<sup>3</sup> in cases involving commercial law, and the doctrine allowing only the sovereign to challenge *ultra vires*<sup>4</sup> conveyances of corporations. As to recognition of the social interest in the security of acquisitions, note the insistence of the courts upon *stare decisis* where rules of property are involved. In such cases it is an established proposition that it is better that the law be settled than that it be settled right.

Second, we may put the social interest in the security of social institutions—the claim or want or demand involved in life in civilized society that its fundamental institutions be secure from those forms of action and courses of conduct which threaten their existence or impair their efficient functioning. Looking at them in chronological order, this interest appears in three forms.

The first is an interest in the security of domestic institutions, long recognized in the form of a policy against acts affecting the security of domestic relations or in restraint of marriage. Legislation intended to promote the family as a social institution has been common. There is a policy against actions by members of the family against each other. Today, although the law is becoming much relaxed, this social interest is still weighed heavily against the individual claims of married persons in most divorce legislation. It still weighs heavily against individual claims in the law as to illegitimate children. At times this has been carried so far that great and numerous disabilities have attached to such children lest recognition of their individual interests should weaken a fundamental social institution. The movement to give independence to married women has had collateral effects of impairing the security of this interest, and the balance is not easy to make nor to main-

<sup>2</sup> [In cases of personal property, possession is equivalent to title.]

<sup>3</sup> [To stand by decided matters.]

<sup>4</sup> [Beyond power, or transcending authority.]

tain. The tendency to relax the rules which formerly obtained is brought out in *Russell v. Russell*, in which two of the five law lords dissented as to application of the policy of "preservation of the sanctity of married life," and *Fender v. St. John Mildmay*, in which again two of five law lords dissented as to the rule concerning the validity of a promise of marriage before a divorce proceeding has been finally determined. There are, however, recent cases which tend to uphold the policy formerly well established.

It is no doubt too soon to be sure of even the path which juristic thought of the immediate future will follow. But increased weight given to the social interest in the individual life in the concrete, instead of upon abstract liberty, seems to be indicated. There is emphasis upon the concrete claims of concrete human beings . . . Family law, in which there must be a balance between the security of social institutions and the individual life, is necessarily much affected by such a change.

In another part of the law, the social interest in the security of domestic institutions still weighs heavily, in comparison, however, with the general security. A wife is not to be held as accessory after the fact for harboring a felon husband or for helping him escape. The common law does not require a wife to choose between fidelity to the relation of husband and wife and duty to the state. Also legislation as to mothers' pensions proceeds at least in large part upon this interest.

A second form is an interest in the security of religious institutions. In the beginning this is closely connected with the general security. A chief point of origin of the criminal law, of that part of the law by which social interests as such are directly and immediately secured, is in religion. Sacrifice of the impious offender who has affronted the gods, and exclusion from society of the impious offender whose presence threatens to bring upon his fellows the wrath of the gods, are, in part at least, the originals of capital punishment and of outlawry. Religious organization was long a stronger and more active agency of social control than political organization. In the Anglo-Saxon laws the appeals or exhortations addressed to the people as Christians are at least as important as the threats addressed to them as subjects. One of the great English statutes of the thirteenth century recites that Parliament had met to make laws "for the common Profit of holy Church, and of the Realm." It is only in relatively recent times that we have come to think of blasphemy as involving no more than a social interest in the general morals, of Sunday laws only in terms of a social interest in the general health, of heresy as less dangerous socially than radical views upon economics or politics, or of preaching or teaching of atheism as involved in a guaranteed liberty. Today what was formerly referred to this interest is usu-

ally referred to the social interest in the general morals. Questions as to the interest in the security of religious institutions have been debated in all lands.

In a third form the interest is one in the security of political institutions. This interest has weighed heavily in much twentieth-century legislation too familiar to require more than mention. When the public called for such legislation for the security of political institutions, absolute constitutional guarantees of free speech and natural rights of individual self-assertion, which in other times had moved courts to refuse to enjoin repeated and undoubted libels, lest liberty be infringed, were not suffered to stand in the way. If the individual interests involved had been conceived less absolutely and had been looked at in another light, as identified with a social interest in the general progress, they might have fared better.

Perhaps a fourth form of the interest in the security of social institutions should be added, namely, an interest in the security of economic institutions. Formerly, these were chiefly commercial. Today industrial institutions also must be taken into account. Judicial recognitions of a social interest in the security of commercial institutions are numerous. In a leading case in which it was determined that a bank note payable to bearer passed current the same as coin, Lord Mansfield grounded the judgment "upon the general course of business, and . . . the consequences to trade and commerce: which would be much incommoded by a contrary determination." More than one decision in the last generation on labor law seems to go upon an interest in maintaining the industrial regime in the face of persistent pressure from the claims of organized workingmen. Some of the policies to be considered presently under the social interest in general progress might be referred to this head.

Third, we may put the social interest in the general morals, the claim or want or demand involved in social life in civilized society to be secured against acts or courses of conduct offensive to the moral sentiments of the general body of individuals therein for the time being. This interest is recognized in Roman law in the protection of *boni mores*.<sup>5</sup> It is recognized in our law by policies against dishonesty, corruption, gambling, and things of immoral tendency; by treating continuing menaces to the general morals as nuisances; and by the common-law doctrine that acts contrary to good morals and subversive of general morals are misdemeanors. It is recognized in equity in the maxim that he who comes into equity must come with clean hands. Similar provisions are to be found in the private law and in the criminal law in other lands. Obstinately held ideas of morality may in time come in conflict with ideas arising from changed social and economic condi-

<sup>5</sup> [*Good customs.*]



tions or newer religious and philosophical views. In such cases we must reach a balance between the social interest in the general morals, and the social interest in general progress, taking form in a policy of free discussion. What was said above as to free speech and writing and the social interest in security of social institutions applies here also.

Fourth, there is the social interest in conservation of social resources, that is, the claim or want or demand involved in social life in civilized society that the goods of existence shall not be wasted; that where all human claims or wants or desires may not be satisfied, in view of infinite individual desires and limited natural means of satisfying them, the latter be made to go as far as possible; and, to that end, that acts or courses of conduct which tend needlessly to destroy or impair these goods shall be restrained. In its simplest form this is an interest in the use and conservation of natural resources, and is recognized in the doctrines as to *res communes*,<sup>6</sup> which may be used but not owned, by the common law as to riparian rights and constitutional and statutory provisions where irrigation is practiced, by modern game laws, by the recent doctrines as to percolating water and surface water, and by laws as to waste of natural gas and oil. There has been a progressive tendency to restrict the *ius abutendi*<sup>7</sup> which the maturity of law attributed to owners. A crowded and hungry world may yet weigh this interest against individual claims to free action still further by preventing destruction of commodities in order to keep up prices, or even cutting off the common-law liberty of the owner of land to sow it to salt if he so desires. At times overproduction of agricultural products has led to proposals for restriction of the owner's *ius utendi*<sup>8</sup> by regulation of what crops he may raise. At other times there are projects for administrative appointment of receivers of agricultural land cultivated or managed by the owner "in such a manner as to prejudice materially the production of food thereon. . . ." Restrictions with respect to housing proceed on another aspect of this same social interest.

A closely related social interest is one in protection and training of dependents and defectives. It might from one point of view be called an interest in conservation of the human assets of society. In one form it was recognized long ago in the common-law system by the jurisdiction of the chancellor,

<sup>6</sup> [In civil law, those things which, though a separate share of them can be enjoyed by everybody, can not be exclusively and wholly appropriated; examples are air, light, running water.]

<sup>7</sup> [The right to abuse. By this phrase is understood the right to abuse property, or having full dominion over it.]

<sup>8</sup> [The right to use property without destroying its substance. It is employed in contradistinction to the *ius abutendi*.]

representing the king as *parens patriae*,<sup>9</sup> over infants, lunatics, and idiots. This jurisdiction has had a significant development in recent times in the juvenile court, and an extension to youthful offenders beyond the period of infancy is being urged. Again, there has been an extension of the idea of protection and training of dependents, on one hand to the reformation of mature delinquents, and on another hand to protection of the mature who are yet economically more or less dependent. This has gone a long way in recent times in social security or social insurance legislation and in small loan legislation. The latter has had a historical background in the interference of equity to prevent oppression of debtors and necessitous persons. Also after the first world war there was legislative recognition of a social interest in rehabilitation of the maimed. Much of the legislation referred to runs counter to the insistence upon abstract individual liberty in the juristic theory of the last century. It was formerly often pronounced arbitrary and so unconstitutional by courts whose dogmatic scheme could admit no social interest other than the general security. There has been a significant widening of the field of legally recognized and secured social interests. But for the most part the claims or demands here considered are better treated in connection with the social interest in the individual life.

Fifth, there is the social interest in general progress, that is, the claim or want or demand involved in social life in civilized society, that the development of human powers and of human control over nature for the satisfaction of human wants go forward; the demand that social engineering be increasingly and continuously improved; as it were, the self-assertion of the social group toward higher and more complete development of human powers. This interest appears in three main forms, an interest in economic progress, an interest in political progress, and an interest in cultural progress. The social interest in economic progress has long been recognized in law and has been secured in many ways. In the common law it is expressed in four policies: the policy as to freedom of property from restrictions upon sale or use, the policy as to free trade and consequent policy against monopoly, the policy as to free industry, which has had to give much ground in recent legislation and judicial decision, and the policy as to encouragement of invention, which is behind patent legislation and there comes in conflict with the policy as to free trade. All of these policies have important consequences in everyday law. It may be thought that some of them should be classified

<sup>9</sup> [*Father of the country*. In England the king, in the United States the state, as sovereign, has power of guardianship over persons under disability.]

rather as forms of a social interest in the security of economic institutions. As I read the cases, however, these demands have pressed upon courts and jurists from the standpoint of their relation to economic progress. If that relation fails, they are not likely to maintain themselves. Likewise the law has long recognized a social interest in political progress. In American bills of rights, and in written constitutions generally, a policy of free criticism of public men, public acts, and public officers, and a policy of free formation, free holding, and free expression of political opinion are guaranteed as identified with individual rights. Moreover, at common law, the privilege of fair comment upon public men and public affairs recognizes and secures the same interest. But the third form, the social interest in cultural progress, has not been recognized in the law so clearly. It may be said to involve four policies: a policy of free science, a policy of free letters, a policy of encouragement of arts and letters, and a policy of promotion of education and learning. The last two have been recognized to some extent in copyright laws and in American constitutional provisions for the promotion of higher learning. The first two have made their way more slowly because of conflict or supposed conflict with the security of religious and political institutions.

Closely connected with the interest in cultural progress is a social interest in aesthetic surroundings, which recently has been pressing for legal recognition. Fifty years ago, Sir Frederick Pollock could say with assurance that our law ignored aesthetic relations, and, comparing the English with the French in this respect, could quote Hood's lines:

Nature which gave them the goût  
Only gave us the gout.

In the United States, courts and legislatures were long engaged in a sharp struggle over billboard laws and laws against hideous forms of outdoor advertising. For a time also the interest pressed in another way in connection with town planning legislation. It is significant that the courts are now ready to admit a policy in favor of the aesthetic as reasonable and constitutionally permissible.

Last, and in some ways most important of all, as we now are coming to think, there is the social interest in the individual life. One might call it the social interest in the individual moral and social life, or in the individual human life. It is the claim or want or demand involved in social life in civilized society that each individual be able to live a human life therein according to the standards of the society. It is the claim or want or demand that, if all individual wants may not be satisfied, they be satisfied at least

so far as is reasonably possible and to the extent of a human minimum. Three forms of this social interest have been recognized in common law or in legislation: individual self-assertion, individual opportunity, and individual conditions of life. The first, the interest in free self-assertion, includes physical, mental, and economic activity. In Spencer's scheme of natural rights, they appear as a "right of free motion and locomotion," a "right of free exchange and free contract," deduced as a sort of free economic motion and locomotion, a "right of free industry," deduced expressly as a modern outgrowth of free motion and locomotion, as a right of free economic activity, a "right of free religious belief and opinion" and a right of free political belief and opinion, the two last being deduced also as modern developments of the same natural right of free motion and locomotion. These are deduced from a "law of equal freedom" which is taken to have been discovered by observation of social phenomena and verified by further observation. Without the aid of this "law of equal freedom" he might have found them by observation of the policies set forth in the law books. The old common-law policy in favor of freedom, the doctrine that one may justify by his natural liberty of action, except where his action takes the form of aggression and so threatens the general security, and in part the policy of free industry, are examples of recognition of a social interest in individual physical self-assertion. The policy in favor of free speech and free belief and opinion, although related also to the social interest in political progress, must be referred in part to a social interest in individual mental self-assertion. Policies favoring free trade and free industry are in part referable to a social interest in free economic self-assertion.

But the most important phase of the social interest in individual self-assertion, from the standpoint of modern law, is what might be called the social interest in freedom of the individual will—the claim or interest, or policy recognizing it, that the individual will shall not be subjected arbitrarily to the will of others. This interest is recognized in an old common-law policy which is declared in the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments. If one will is to be subjected to the will of another through the force of politically organized society, it is not to be done arbitrarily, but is to be done upon some rational basis, which the person coerced, if reasonable, could appreciate. It is to be done upon a reasoned weighing of the interests involved and a reasoned attempt to reconcile them or adjust them. This policy obviously expresses political and juristic experience of what modern psychology has discovered as to the ill effects of repression. For example, it is more and more recognized today in our penal legislation and in our treatment of offenders. It has come to be recognized particularly of late as a result of



pressure upon courts and lawmakers for security in the relation of employer and employee. It is coming to be recognized also in juristic thought in another connection as sociological theories of property replace metaphysical theories. There are many signs of a growing feeling that complete exclusion of all but him whom the law pronounces owner from objects which are the natural media of human existence or means of human activity, must be measured and justified by a reasoned weighing of the interests on both sides and a reasoned attempt to harmonize them or to save as much as we may with the sacrifice of as little on the part of the excluded, no less than on the part of the owner, as we may.

I have called a second form the social interest in individual opportunity. It is the claim or want or demand involved in social life in civilized society that all individuals shall have fair or reasonable (perhaps, as we are coming to think, we must say equal) opportunities—political, physical, cultural, social, and economic. In American thinking we have insisted chiefly on equal political opportunities, since in the pioneer conditions in which our institutions were formative other opportunities, so far as men demanded them, were at hand everywhere. But a claim to fair physical opportunities is recognized in public provision of parks and playgrounds and in public provisions for recreation; the claim to fair cultural opportunities is recognized by laws as to compulsory education of children (although the social interests in general progress and in dependents are also recognized here) as well as by state provisions for universities and for adult education; the claim to fair social opportunities is recognized by civil rights laws; and the claim to fair economic opportunities is recognized, for example, in the legal right to "freedom of the market," and in the so-called "right to pursue a lawful calling," which is weighed with other social interests in regulating training for and admission to professions.

In a third form, an interest in individual conditions of life, the social interest in the individual life appears as a claim that each individual shall have assured to him the conditions of at least a minimum human life under the circumstances of life in the time and place. I have said minimum, which certainly was all that was recognized until relatively recent times. But perhaps we should now say reasonable or even equal. A claim for equal conditions of life is pressing and we can't put the matter as to what is recognized with assurance as we could have done a generation ago. Moreover, the scope of generally asserted demands with respect to the individual life is obviously growing. The Roman law recognized a policy of this sort, and it has long been recognized in American legislation. In weighing individual interests in

view of the social interest in security of acquisitions and security of transactions, we must also take account of the social interest in the human life of each individual, and so must restrict the legal enforcement of demands to what is consistent with a human existence on the part of the person subjected thereto. The Roman law imposed such a limitation in a number of cases in what is called the *beneficium competentiae*.<sup>10</sup> At common law there were restrictions on what could be taken in distress for rent, and the thirteenth-century statute providing for execution by writ of *elegit* exempts the debtor's oxen and beasts of the plow and half of his land. In the United States and recently in continental Europe, this policy is given effect in homestead laws and in exemptions from execution. In the latter, the social interest in the family as a social institution is also a factor. But nineteenth-century opposition to homestead and exemption laws, and in Europe to the *beneficium competentiae*, is significant. The nineteenth century sought to treat such cases as if they involved nothing more than the individual interests of the parties to the debtor-creditor relation, or, if a social interest was considered, sought to think only of the general security, which here takes the form of security of transactions. Other recognitions of this interest may be seen in restrictions on the power of debtors or contractors to saddle themselves with oppressive burdens, as in the doctrines of equity heretofore referred to, as in usury laws, and more recently in "loan shark" legislation. A notable instance in recent judicial decision may be seen in the English doctrine as to covenants not to exercise the calling for which one has trained himself. Statutes forbidding contracts by laborers to take their pay in orders on company stores, and as to conditions and hours of labor, minimum wage laws, child labor laws, and housing laws, are recognitions of the same interest.

Again, when the law confers or exercises a power of control, we feel that the legal order should safeguard the human existence of the person controlled. Thus the old-time sea law, with its absolute power of the master over the sailor, the old-time ignominious punishments, that treated the human offender like a brute, that did not save his human dignity—all such things are disappearing as the circle of recognized interests widens and we come to take account of the social interest in the individual life and to weigh that interest with the social interest in the general security, on which the last century insisted so exclusively.

<sup>10</sup> [The right which an insolvent debtor had, in Roman law, on making cession of his property for the benefit of his creditors, to retain what was required for him to live honestly according to his condition.]

Such in outline are the social interests which are recognized or are coming to be recognized in modern law. Looked at functionally, the law is an attempt to satisfy, to reconcile, to harmonize, to adjust these overlapping and often conflicting claims and demands, either through securing them directly and immediately, or through securing certain individual interests, or through delimitations or compromises of individual interests, so as to give effect to the greatest total of interests or to the interests that weigh most in our civilization, with the least sacrifice of the scheme of interests as a whole.

## DAVID RIESMAN

AS A BACKGROUND to the following selection, from David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd—A Study of the Changing American Character* (1950), it is necessary for the reader to become aware of a threefold distinction between "tradition-directed," "inner-directed," and "other-directed" societies which runs throughout the book. A tradition-directed society is defined as a folk, status, or *Gemeinschaft* society—e.g., Hindu, or medieval Christian—which is slow to change and in which a person's character and decisions are dominantly shaped by local, public traditions. An inner-directed society, of which the characteristic example is the post-medieval, Protestant, capitalistic world of the Occident, reflects conditions of population increase and of economic and geographic expansion. In such a society norms and goals are implanted in offspring at an early age, so that their later characters and careers are "self-made." The inner-directed person, whether the seventeenth-century Puritan or the nineteenth-century captain of industry, is less obedient to traditions than to what Riesman calls an internal "psychological gyroscope." Finally, the other-directed type, notably the twentieth-century American, appears in an era of incipient population decline. Since his is the society of abundance to which inner-directed strivings give issue, he is more concerned with consumption than with production, with keeping up with the Joneses than with obeying the ingrained imperatives of his Protestant heritage. In the chapter "Images of Power," Riesman explores the implications of the shift from inner- to other-direction in twentieth-century American political life.

David Riesman was born in Philadelphia in 1909 and was graduated from the Harvard Law School. He became law clerk to Justice Brandeis and then deputy assistant district attorney of New York County. Subsequently he entered the academic world, where he pursued his interests in the social sciences and psychology, and has become professor of social science at the University of Chicago. *The Lonely Crowd*, which Riesman wrote with the assistance of Nathan Glazer and Reuel Denny, was followed in 1952 by a sequel, *Faces in the Crowd*. In 1954 he published a collection of essays, *Individualism Reconsidered*.





## THE LONELY CROWD

*Images of Power*

*In the United States the more opulent citizens take great care not to stand aloof from the people; on the contrary, they constantly keep on easy terms with the lower classes; they listen to them, they speak to them every day. They know that the rich in democracies always stand in need of the poor, and that in democratic times you attach a poor man to you more by your manner than by benefits conferred.—Tocqueville, DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA*

There has been in the last fifty years a change in the configuration of power in America, in which a single hierarchy with a ruling class at its head has been replaced by a number of "veto groups" among which power is dispersed. This change has many complex roots and complex consequences, including the change in political mood from moralizing to tolerance. A clear-cut power structure helped to create the clarity of goals of the inner-directed; an amorphous power structure helps to create the consumer orientation of the other-directed.

## I. THE LEADERS AND THE LED

There have been two periods in American history in which a sharply defined ruling class emerged. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the Federalist leadership—landed-gentry and mercantilist-money leadership—certainly thought of itself as, and was, a ruling group. Long before its leadership was actually dislodged, its power was disputed and, in decisive instances, overruled in the northern and middle states by yeoman farmers and artisans. These latter, having little time or gift for politics, ordinarily left it to their "betters," but they retained a veto on what was done and occasionally, as with Jackson, moved into a more positive command. After the Civil War, however, these farmer and artisan groups lost their capacity to check what was done, and the captains of industry emerged as a ruling class. During their hegemony the images and the actualities of power in America coincided more closely than I think they do today.

*Captains of Industry and Captains of Consumption.* According to this view of the matter, the election of 1896 appears as an historical watershed: the high point of oligarchic rule. In terms of political style, there were moral-

---

This selection has been reprinted from David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd* (pp. 239-259, Doubleday Anchor Books ed., Doubleday and Company, Inc., Garden City, N.Y., 1953) by permission of The Yale University Press, New Haven, copyright holder.

izers for Bryan and moralizers for McKinley. And there were groups that, whether or not they saw their interests in moral terms, had a clear picture of themselves and of their interests; they, too, responded to the election in an inner-directed way. Only a few people like Brooks Adams, who supported Bryan out of his hatred for the "goldbugs," were aware of some of the ambiguities in the positions of both candidates.

Certainly, the victorious leaders—McKinley, Hanna, and Morgan in their several bailiwicks—were not aware of ambiguity. The success of their electoral bid is less important to us than the mood of their undertaking, which was one of conscious leadership, directed by conscious class considerations. This self-conscious leadership took support from the close connection . . . between politics and work. The world of work was the great world; politics was an extension that could either facilitate work or sabotage it. While bankers and Grangers had different notions as to what work politics should do and what leave undone, they agreed as to the primacy of the production side of life.

Of course, the political sphere was not devoid of entertainment for the inner-directed man: with its opportunity for cracker-barrel argument, beer drinking, and shirt-sleeved good-fellowship by torchlight, it had its occasional uses as a "downward" escape from the dignities of work and the propertied existence. But the great difference from today is that the leaders went into politics to do a job—primarily to assure the conquest of American resources—rather than to seek a responsive audience. As Rockefeller sold his oil more by force or cheapness than by brand, so the late nineteenth-century political leader sold his wares (votes or decisions) to the highest bidder. Either cash or morality might bid—but not "good will" as such.

This situation and these inner-directed motivations gave a clarity to the political and social scene in 1896 that it does not appear to have had in Tocqueville's day and has not had since. The bullet that killed McKinley marked the end of the days of explicit class leadership. Muckraking and savage political cartooning—arts that depend on clarity of line—continued for a time and of course have not quite vanished yet. But as the old-time religion depended on a clear image of heaven and hell and clear judgments of good and evil, so the old-time politics depended on a clear class structure and the clear and easily moralized judgments of good and bad that flow from it. It depended, too, and I cannot emphasize the point too much, on an agreement between leaders and led that the work sphere of life was dominant. And because the goals were clear, the obvious job of the leader was to lead; of the led, to follow. Their political cooperation, like their cooperation

in industry and agriculture, was based on mutual interests, whether directly moralized or not, rather than on mutual preferences and likings.

What I have said must be taken as an "ideal-typical" political portrait of the age, useful by way of contrast to our own times. Actually, the changes are, as always, changes in emphasis and degree, and the portrait would be seriously overdrawn if the reader should conclude that no emotional moods, no audience concerns for charisma and glamor, eddied about the relations between leaders and led. These relations were not built entirely out of sober moralizing and well-understood economic interests, but occasionally, as Veblen described matters, the Captain of Industry served to provide the underlying population with personages to admire "to the greater spiritual comfort of all parties concerned."

Ruling-class theories, applied to contemporary America, seem to be spectral survivals of this earlier time. The captain of industry no longer runs business, no longer runs politics, and no longer provides legitimate "spiritual comfort." Here and there, it is true, there are survivals. In the booming Southwest, Texas still produces men like Glenn McCarthy, and California produced an old-style lion of the jungle in A. P. Giannini (who was, significantly enough, from a family which lacked the opportunity to educate him for the newer business motivations). Yet even these types are touched by traits that were not nearly so evident in the earlier captains of industry who fascinated Veblen as Lucifer fascinated Milton. Like Henry Kaiser, they depend much more than did the older magnificoes on public opinion and, as a corollary to public opinion, on the attitude of government. To this end they tend to exploit their personalities, or allow them to be exploited, in a way that makes the elder Rockefeller's Ivy Lee stunt of dime-giving seem as remote as the Fuggers.

Much more than their pre-World War I predecessors, then, these surviving captains stay within the limits as well as the possibilities of the economy of the glad hand. If they enter politics they do so because it is a sport or obligation for the rich; or simply because they are tied in with government at every step in their ramifying enterprises. These latter-day captains neither see themselves nor are recognized as political leaders who, by their presence and by what they stand for, clarify and thereby moralize politics. The elder Morgan and his friends thought it was up to them to stop Bryan and to stop the depression of 1907. No one has taken their place.

In the focus of public attention the old captains of industry have been replaced by an entirely new type: the Captains of Nonindustry, of Consump-

tion and Leisure. Surveys of content in the mass media show a shift in the kinds of information about business and political leaders that audiences ask for. In an earlier day the audience was given a story of the hero's work-minded rise to success. Today, the ladder climbing is taken for granted or is seen in terms of the breaks, and the hero's tastes in dress, food, women, and recreation are emphasized—these are, as we have seen, the frontiers on which the reader can himself compete, while he cannot imagine himself in the work role of the president of the United States or the head of a big company.

What is more, there is a shift in such biographies from an accent on business leaders to an accent on consumption leaders. Proportionately, actors, artists, entertainers, get more space than they used to, and the heroes of the office, hustings, and factory get less. These consumers of the surplus product may, in Veblen's terms, provide "spiritual comfort" by their very skill in consumption. The glamor of such heroes of consumption may reside in their incompetence in the skills of businesslike performance and . . . in some cases their wholly personal "sincerity" may do duty in place of more objective artistic criteria.

But of course, these captains of consumption are not leaders. They are still only personalities, employed to adorn movements, not to lead them. Yet the actual leaders have much in common with them.

For an illustration we can turn to a recent American leader—undoubtedly a leader—who shared many characteristics of the artist and entertainer: Franklin D. Roosevelt. We are accustomed to thinking of him as a man of great power. Yet his role in leading the country into war was very different from that of McKinley or even of Wilson. Think of McKinley pacing the floor of his study, deciding whether or not to ask for a declaration of war on Spain—when he already knew that Spain would capitulate. McKinley felt it was up to him; so did Wilson. Roosevelt felt he could only maneuver within very narrow limits, limits which came close to leaving the decision to the enemy.

Again, if we compare his activities during the war years with those of Churchill, we can see important differences. Churchill led the British in something like the old-time sense of an explicit relation between the leader and the followers. That he led, moreover, as a moralizing leader and not, despite his great personal charm, as a "personality," appeared in the readiness of the electorate to follow him in war and to dispense with him in peace: they were work-minded rather than consumption-minded about him. Roosevelt on the other hand remained throughout the war, as before, a powerful though tolerant persuader, even conniver and stimulator, of changes in pub-



lic opinion that he followed with deep concern at all times. Churchill exploited his indignation, Roosevelt his charm.

The admittedly real differences in the military situation of Britain and the United States during this period are not sufficient to explain these differences in the mood and method of leadership. Much more important than the wartime differences between the two countries are the differing shifts in political pattern during the last half century. America in the 90's could be led politically and morally. Since then we have entered a social and political phase in which power is dispersed among veto groups. These groups are too many and diverse to be led by moralizing; what they want is too various to be moralized and too intangible to be bought off for cash alone; and what is called political leadership consists, as we could see in Roosevelt's case, in the tolerant ability to manipulate coalitions.

This means that the men who, at an earlier historical period, were political leaders are now busy with the other-directed occupation of studying the feedback from all the others—their constituencies, their correspondents, and friends and enemies within influential pressure groups. The revolution in communications makes this attention possible in ways that were not available to the equally assiduous client-cultivator of an earlier day, who could buy a few editors if he wanted favorable things said. And those who were once the followers have learned the arts of lobbying and media pressure. The roll call of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century leaders contains many men who refused to follow their flock: Gladstone and Cleveland, Robert Peel and John Stuart Mill (as M.P.), Woodrow Wilson and Winston Churchill. Even today the need to impose unpopular courses brings to the fore inner-directed types: Cripps, for instance, in England; Stimson and Robert Patterson in this country. Of course, political figures in all ages have been dependent on their following, and opportunism and manipulation are not a twentieth-century discovery. The inner-directed leader, however, was quite conscious of discrepancies between his views and those of others; if he shifted his course, it was still *his* course. Moreover, since he was ambitious, he might well prefer later fame to momentary warmth of response; in any event he did not need to have everybody love him, but only those who mattered for his fortunes.

In his autobiography, John Stuart Mill tells the following story:

In the pamphlet, "Thoughts on Parliamentary Reform," I had said, rather bluntly, that the working classes, though differing from those of some other countries, in being ashamed of lying, are yet generally liars. This passage some opponent got printed in a placard which was handed to me at a meeting, chiefly composed of

the working classes, and I was asked whether I had written and published it. I at once answered "I did." Scarcely were these two words out of my mouth, when vehement applause resounded through the whole meeting.

It is interesting to compare this incident with the practices of certain American public figures who not only would not think of saying anything that might offend an audience but who frequently depart from a prepared text, carefully designed to please a wide audience, in order to mollify the smaller face-to-face group before whom the speech happens to be delivered.

The old-time captain of industry was also a captain of consumption: what standards were set, were set by him. He was also a captain of politics. The new captain of consumption who has usurped his place in the public eye is limited severely to the sphere of consumption—which itself has of course greatly expanded. Today, the personalities from the leisure world, no matter how much loved, lack the strength and the situation for leadership. If a movie star of today tries to put across a political message, in or out of films, he finds himself vulnerable to all sorts of pressures. The movie producer is no more powerful. The Catholics, the Methodists, the organized morticians, the state department, the southerners, the Jews, the doctors, all put their pressure on the vehicle that is being prepared for mass distribution. Piety or decency protects some minority groups that have no lobbies. The movie maker acts as a broker among these veto groups in a situation much too intricate to encourage his taking a firm, moralizing stance. At best, he or someone in his organization may sneak a moral and political message into the film as Roosevelt or someone in his organization sneaked over an appointment or a new coordinating agency. The message, the appointment, the agency—none of them could get very far in the Alice in Wonderland croquet game of the veto groups.

## II. WHO HAS THE POWER?

*The Veto Groups.* The shifting nature of the lobby provides us with an important clue as to the difference between the present American political scene and that of the age of McKinley. The ruling class of businessmen could relatively easily (though perhaps mistakenly) decide where their interests lay and what editors, lawyers, and legislators might be paid to advance them. The lobby ministered to the clear leadership, privilege, and imperative of the business ruling class.

Today we have substituted for that leadership a series of groups, each of which has struggled for and finally attained a power to stop things con-

ceivably inimical to its interests and, within far narrower limits, to start things. The various business groups, large and small, the movie-censoring groups, the farm groups and the labor and professional groups, the major ethnic groups and major regional groups, have in many instances succeeded in maneuvering themselves into a position in which they are able to neutralize those who might attack them. The very increase in the number of these groups, and in the kinds of interests "practical" and "fictional" they are protecting, marks, therefore, a decisive change from the lobbies of an earlier day. There is a change in method, too, in the way the groups are organized, the way they handle each other, and the way they handle the public, that is, the unorganized.

These veto groups are neither leader-groups nor led-groups. The only leaders of national scope left in the United States today are those who can placate the veto groups. The only followers left in the United States today are those unorganized and sometimes disorganized unfortunates who have not yet invented their group.

Within the veto groups, there is, of course, the same struggle for top places that goes on in other bureaucratic setups. Among the veto groups competition is monopolistic; rules of fairness and fellowship dictate how far one can go. Despite the rules there are, of course, occasional "price wars," like the jurisdictional disputes of labor unions or Jewish defense groups; these are ended by negotiation, the division of territory, and the formation of a roof organization for the previously split constituency. These big monopolies, taken as a single group, are in devastating competition with the not yet grouped, much as the fair-trade economy competes against the free-trade economy. These latter scattered followers find what protection they can in the interstices around the group-minded.<sup>1</sup>

Each of the veto groups in this pattern is capable of an aggressive move, but the move is sharply limited in its range by the way in which the various groups have already cut up the sphere of politics and arrayed certain massive expectations behind each cut. Both within the groups and in the situation created by their presence, the political mood tends to become one of other-

<sup>1</sup> It should be clear that monopolistic competition, both in business and politics, is competition. People are very much aware of their rivals, within and without the organization. They know who they are, but by the very nature of monopolistic competition they are seldom able to eliminate them entirely. While we have been talking of fair trade and tolerance, this should not obscure the fact that for the participants the feeling of being in a rivalrous setup is very strong. Indeed, they face the problem of so many other-directed people: how to combine the appearance of friendly, personalized, "sincere" behavior with the ruthless, sometimes almost paranoid, envies of their occupational life.

directed tolerance. The vetoes so bind action that it is hard for the moralizers to conceive of a program that might in any large way alter the relations between political and personal life or between political and economic life. In the amorphous power structure created by the veto groups it is hard to distinguish rulers from the ruled, those to be aided from those to be opposed, those on your side from those on the other side. This very pattern encourages the inside-dopester who can unravel the personal linkages, and discourages the enthusiast or indignant who wants to install the good or fend off the bad. Probably, most of all it encourages the new-style indifferent who feels and is often told that his and everyone else's affairs are in the hands of the experts and that laymen, though they should "participate," should not really be too inquisitive or aroused.

By their very nature the veto groups exist as defense groups, not as leadership groups. If it is true that they do "have the power," they have it by virtue of a necessary mutual tolerance. More and more they mirror each other in their style of political action, including their interest in public relations and their emphasis on internal harmony of feelings. There is a tendency for organizations as differently oriented as, say, the Young Socialists and the 4-H Club, to adopt similar psychological methods of salesmanship to obtain and solidify their recruits.

This does not mean, however, that the veto groups are formed along the lines of character structure. As in a business corporation there is room for extreme inner-directed and other-directed types, and all mixtures between, so in a veto group there can exist complex "symbiotic" relationships among people of different political styles. Thus a team of lobbyists may include both moralizers and inside-dopesters, sometimes working in harness, sometimes in conflict; and the constituency of the team may be composed mainly of new-style political indifferents who have enough literacy and organizational experience to throw weight around when called upon. Despite these complications I think it fair to say that the veto groups, even when they are set up to protect a clear-cut moralizing interest, are generally forced to adopt the political manners of the other-directed.

In saying this I am talking about the national scene. The smaller the constituency, of course, the smaller the number of veto groups involved and the greater the chance that some one of them will be dominant. Thus, in local politics there is more indignation and less tolerance, just as even the *Chicago Tribune* is a tolerant paper in comparison with the community throwaways in many Chicago neighborhoods.



The same problem may be considered from another perspective. Various groups have discovered that they can go quite far in the amorphous power situation in America without being stopped. Our society is behaviorally open enough to permit a considerable community of gangsters a comfortable living under a variety of partisan political regimes. In their lack of concern for public relations these men are belated businessmen. So are some labor leaders who have discovered their power to hold up the economy, though in most situations what is surprising is the moderation of labor demands—a moderation based more on psychological restraints than on any power that could effectively be interposed. Likewise, it is sometimes possible for an aggressive group, while not belonging to the entrenched veto-power teams, to push a bill through a legislature. Thus, the original Social Security Act went through Congress, so far as I can discover, because it was pushed by a devoted but tiny cohort; the large veto groups including organized labor were neither very much for it nor very much against it.

For similar reason those veto groups are in many political situations strongest whose own memberships are composed of veto groups, especially veto groups of one. The best example of this is the individual farmer who, after one of the farm lobbies has made a deal for him, can still hold out for more. The farm lobby's concern for the reaction of other veto groups, such as labor unions, cuts little ice with the individual farmer. This fact may strengthen the lobby in a negotiation: it can use its internal public relations problems as a counter in bargaining, very much as does a diplomat who tells a foreign minister that he must consider how Senator so-and-so will react. For, no matter what the other-directedness of the lobby's leaders, they cannot bind their membership to carry out a public relations approach. Many labor unions have a similar power because they cannot control their memberships who, if not satisfied with a deal made by the union, can walk off or otherwise sabotage a job.

In contrast, those veto groups are often weaker whose other-directed orientation can dominate their memberships. Large corporations are vulnerable to a call from the White House because, save for a residual indignant like Sewell Avery, their officials are themselves other-directed and because, once the word from the chief goes out, the factory superintendents, no matter how boiling mad, have to fall into line with the new policy by the very nature of the centralized organization for which they work: they can sabotage top management on minor matters but not, say, on wage rates or tax accounting. As against this, the American Catholic Church possesses immense veto-group power because it combines a certain amount of centralized

command—and a public picture of a still greater amount—with a highly decentralized priesthood (each priest is in a sense his own trade association secretary) and a membership organization of wide-ranging ethnic, social, and political loyalties; this structure permits great flexibility in bargaining.

These qualifications, however, do not change the fact that the veto groups, taken together, constitute a new buffer region between the old, altered, and thinning extremes of those who were once leaders and led. It is both the attenuation of leaders and led, and the other-oriented doings of these buffers, that help to give many moralizers a sense of vacuum in American political life.

The veto groups, by the conditions their presence creates and by the requirements they set for leadership in politics, foster the tolerant mood of other-direction and hasten the retreat of the inner-directed indignant.

*Is There a Ruling Class Left?* Nevertheless, people go on acting as if there still were a decisive ruling class in contemporary America. In the postwar years, businessmen thought labor leaders and politicians ran the country, while labor and the left thought that "Wall Street" ran it, or the "sixty families." Wall Street, confused perhaps by its dethronement as a telling barometer of capital-formation weather, may have thought that the mid-western industrial barons, cushioned on plant expansion money in the form of heavy depreciation reserves and undivided profits, ran the country. They might have had some evidence for this in the fact that the New Deal was much tougher with finance capital—e.g., the SEC and the Holding Company Act—than with industrial capital and that when, in the undistributed profits tax, it tried to subject the latter to a stockholder and money-market control, the tax was quickly repealed.

But these barons of Pittsburgh, Weirton, Akron, and Detroit, though certainly a tougher crowd than the Wall Streeters, are . . . coming more and more to think of themselves as trustees for their beneficiaries. And whereas, from the point of view of labor and the left, these men ran the War Production Board in the interest of their respective companies, one could argue just as easily that the WPB experience was one of the congeries of factors that have tamed the barons. It put them in a situation where they had to view their company from the point of view of "the others."

Despite the absence of intensive studies of business power and of what happens in a business negotiation, one can readily get an impressionistic sense of the change in business behavior in the last generation. In the pages of *Fortune*, that excellent chronicler of business, one can see that there are few survivals of the kinds of dealings—with other businessmen, with labor,

with the government—that were standard operating practice for the pre-World War I tycoons. Moreover, in its twenty-year history, *Fortune* itself has shown, and perhaps it may be considered not too unrepresentative of its audience, a steady decline of interest in business as such and a growing interest in once peripheral matters, such as international relations, social science, and other accoutrements of the modern executive.

But it is of course more difficult to know whether character has changed as well as behavior—whether, as some contend, businessmen simply rule today in a more subtle, more “managerial” way. In “Manager Meets Union” Joseph M. Goldsen and Lillian Low have depicted the psychological dependence of a contemporary sales manager on the approval of the men under him, his willingness to go to great lengths, in terms of concessions, to maintain interpersonal warmth in his relations with them, and his fierce resentment of the union as a barrier to this emotional exchange. As against this, one must set the attitude of some of the auto-supply companies whose leadership still seems much more craft-oriented than people-oriented and therefore unwilling to make concessions and none too concerned with the emotional atmosphere of negotiations. Likewise, the General Motors-UAW negotiations of 1946, as reported in print, sound more like a cockfight than a Platonic symposium, although in Peter Drucker’s *Concept of the Corporation*, a study of General Motors published in the same year, there is much evidence of management eagerness to build a big, happy family.

Power, indeed, is founded, in a large measure, on interpersonal expectations and attitudes. If businessmen *feel* weak and dependent, they do in actuality *become* weaker and more dependent, no matter what material resources may be ascribed to them. My impression, based mainly on experiences of my own in business and law practice, is that businessmen from large manufacturing companies, though they often talk big, are easily frightened by the threat of others’ hostility; they may pound the table, but they look to others for leadership and do not care to get out of line with their peer-groupers. Possibly, attitudes toward such an irascible businessman as Sewell Avery might mark a good dividing line between the older and the newer attitudes. Those businessmen who admire Avery, though they might not dare to imitate him, are becoming increasingly an elderly minority, while the younger men generally are shocked by Avery’s “highhandedness,” his rebuff of the glad hand.

The desire of businessmen to be well thought of has led to the irony that each time a professor writes a book attacking business, even if almost nobody reads it, he creates jobs in industry for his students in public relations, trade

association work, and market research! While the Black Horse Cavalry of an earlier era held up businessmen by threatening to let pass crippling legislation desired by antibusiness moralizers, today many honest intellectuals who would not think of taking a bribe hold business or trade association jobs because their clients have been scared, perhaps by these very men, into taking cognizance of some actual or imaginary veto group. Since a large structure is built up to woo the group, no test of power is made to see whether the group has real existence or real strength. Understandably, ideologies about who has power in America are relied upon to support these amiable fictions which serve . . . to provide the modern businessman with an endless shopping list, an endless task of glad-handing. This is a far cry, I suggest, from the opportunistic glad-handing of the wealthy on which Tocqueville comments at the chapter head; very likely, what was mere practice in his day has become embedded in character in ours.

Businessmen, moreover, are not the only people who fail to exploit the power position they are supposed, in the eyes of many observers, to have. Army officers are also astonishingly timid about exercising their leadership. During the war one would have thought that the army would be relatively impervious to criticism. But frequently the generals went to great lengths to refrain from doing something about which a congressman might make an unfriendly speech. They did so even at times when they might have brushed the congressman off like an angry fly. When dealing with businessmen or labor leaders, army officers were, it seemed to me, astonishingly deferential; and this was as true of the West Pointers as of the reservists. Of course, there were exceptions, but in many of the situations where the armed services made concessions to propitiate some veto group, they rationalized the concessions in terms of morale or of postwar public relations or, frequently, simply were not aware of their power.

To be sure, some came to the same result by the route of a democratic tradition of civilian dominance. Very likely, it was a good thing for the country that the services were so self-restrained. I do not here deal with the matter on the merits but use it as an illustration of changing character and changing social structure.

All this may lead to the question: well, who *really* runs things? What people fail to see is that, while it may take leadership to start things running, or to stop them, very little leadership is needed once things are under way—that, indeed, things can get terribly snarled up and still go on running. If one studies a factory, an army group, or other large organization, one wonders how things get done at all, with the lack of leadership and with



all the featherbedding. Perhaps they get done because we are still trading on our reserves of inner-direction, especially in the lower ranks. At any rate, the fact they do get done is no proof that there is someone in charge.

There are, of course, still some veto groups that have more power than others and some individuals who have more power than others. But the determination of who these are has to be made all over again for our time: we cannot be satisfied with the answers given by Marx, Mosca, Michels, Pareto, Weber, Veblen, or Burnham, though we can learn from all of them.

There are also phenomena in this vast country that evade all of them (and surely too, evade my collaborators and me). One example is the immense power, both political and economic, possessed by Artie Samish, allegedly the veto-group boss of California. Samish is a new-type lobbyist, who represents not one but scores of interests, often competing ones, from truckers to chiropractors, and who plays one veto group off against others to shake them down and strengthen his own power: he has learned how the other-orientation of the established veto groups will lead them to call still other groups into being through his auspices. Since the old-line parties have little power in California, there is no way of reaching a clear-cut decision for or against a particular veto group through the party system; instead, the state officials have become dependent on Samish for electoral support, or at least non-opposition, through his herded groups of voters and their cash contributions; moreover, he knows how to go directly to the people through the "democratic" plebiscite machinery.<sup>2</sup>

Carey McWilliams has observed that Samish's power rests both on the peculiar election machinery of the state and on the fact that no one industry or allied group of industries, no one union, one ethnic group or region, is dominant. The situation is very different in a state like Montana, where copper is pivotal, and one must be either for the union or for Anaconda. It is different again in Virginia where, as V. O. Key shows in *Southern Politics*, the setup of the state constitution favors control by the old courthouse crowd. In view of these divergences, rooted in local legal niceties as well as in major social and economic factors, it is apparent that any discussion of class and power on the national scene can at best be only an approximation. Yet I would venture to say that the United States is on the whole more like Cali-

<sup>2</sup> Ironically enough, but typically enough, Samish craves the one power he does not have: social power in the society-page sense. A poor boy in origin, he can make or break businessmen and politicians but cannot get into the more exclusive clubs. And while consciously he is said to despise these social leaders whom he can so easily frighten and manipulate, he cannot purge himself of the childhood hurts and childhood images of power that make him vulnerable to their exclusion of him. In this, of course, he resembles other and better-known dictators. . . .

fornia in its variety—but without its veto boss—than like Montana and Virginia in their particularity. The vaster number of veto groups, and their greater power, mean that no one man or small group of men can amass the power nationally that Artie Samish and, in earlier days, Huey Long, have held locally.

Rather, power on the national scene must be viewed in terms of issues. It is possible that, where an issue involves only two or three veto groups, themselves tiny minorities, the official or unofficial broker among the groups can be quite powerful—but only on that issue. However, where the issue involves the country as a whole, no individual or group leadership is likely to be very effective, because the entrenched veto groups cannot be budged: unlike a party that may be defeated at the polls, or a class that may be replaced by another class, the veto groups are always “in.”

One might ask whether one would not find, over a long period of time, that decisions in America favored one group or class—thereby, by definition, the ruling group or class—over others. Does not wealth exert its pull in the long run? In the past this has been so; for the future I doubt it. The future seems to be in the hands of the small business and professional men who control Congress, such as realtors, lawyers, car salesmen, undertakers, and so on; of the military men who control defense and, in part, foreign policy; of the big business managers and their lawyers, finance-committee men, and other counselors who decide on plant investment and influence the rate of technological change; of the labor leaders who control worker productivity and worker votes; of the black belt whites who have the greatest stake in southern politics; of the Poles, Italians, Jews, and Irishmen who have stakes in foreign policy, city jobs, and ethnic religious and cultural organizations; of the editorializers and storytellers who help socialize the young, tease and train the adult, and amuse and annoy the aged; of the farmers—themselves a warring congeries of cattlemen, corn men, dairymen, cotton men, and so on—who control key departments and committees and who, as the living representatives of our inner-directed past, control many of our memories; of the Russians and, to a lesser degree, other foreign powers who control much of our agenda of attention; and so on. The reader can complete the list. Power in America seems to me situational and mercurial; it resists attempts to locate it the way a molecule, under the Heisenberg principle, resists attempts simultaneously to locate it and time its velocity.

But people are afraid of this indeterminacy and amorphousness in the cosmology of power. Even those intellectuals, for instance, who feel themselves very much out of power and who are frightened of those who they

think have the power, prefer to be scared by the power structures they conjure up than to face the possibility that the power structure they believe exists has largely evaporated. Most people prefer to suffer with interpretations that give their world meaning than to relax in the cave without an Ariadne's thread.

Let me now summarize. . . . The inner-directed person, if he is political at all, is related to the political scene either by his morality, his well-defined interests, or both. His relationship to his opinions is close, not peripheral. The opinions are means of defending certain principles of politics. They may be highly charged and personal, as in the political discussion in the first pages of Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist As a Young Man*, or they may be highly charged and impersonal—a means of defending one's proper Bostonianism or other class position. In either case one's own opinions are felt to matter and to have some direct relationship to the objective world in which one lives.

As against this, the other-directed person, if he is political, is related to the political scene as a member of a veto group. He leaves it to the group to defend his interests, cooperating when called on to vote, to apply pressure, and so on. These pressure tactics seem to make his opinions manifest on the political level, but they actually help make it possible for him to be detached from his opinions. No longer operating as an "independent voter"—mostly an amiable fiction even in the era dependent on inner-direction—his political opinions, as such, are not felt to be related to his political function. Thus, they can serve him as a social counter in his role as a peer-group consumer of the political news-of-the-day. He can be tolerant of other opinions not only because of his characterological tolerance but also because they are "mere" opinions, interesting or amusing perhaps, but lacking the weight of even a partial, let alone a total, commitment to one's political role or action. They are "mere" opinions, moreover, because so intractable is the political world of the veto groups that opinion as such is felt to be almost irrelevant.

The inner-directed political moralizer has a firm grip—often much too firm—on the gamut of judgments that he is willing to apply anywhere and everywhere. The other-directed inside-dopester is unable to fortify any particular judgment with conviction springing from a summarized and organized emotional tone. It could be argued that the suppressed affect or emotional tone is still there, remaining hidden. Freudian doctrine would predict the return of the repressed. But it seems more likely, social habit being as powerful as

it is, that the repeated suppression of such enthusiasm or moral indignation as the inner-directed man would consider natural permanently decreases the capacity of the other-directed man for those forms of response. The other-directed man may even begin as an inner-directed man who plays at being other-directed. He ends up being what he plays, and his mask becomes the perhaps inescapable reality of his style of life.



## ROBERT M. MACIVER

RECOGNITION of the complexities inherent in any form of social or political organization is to be regarded as a genuine intellectual gain, rather than as a source of bafflement or discouragement. In the following selection, taken from *The Web of Government* (1947) by Robert M. MacIver, the argument, classic in its principles and modern in its relevancy, is advanced that in the very diversity of levels and aims of life, in the multiplicity of groups and interests, is to be found the essential condition of a liberal democratic polity.



### THE WEB OF GOVERNMENT

#### *The Unit and the Unity*

##### MAN AND SOCIETY

It is curious how often the most resounding philosophies ignore the most obvious facts. If we consider the nature of human society we find that everywhere it exhibits two major characteristics either of which, if exclusively stressed, will lead us to one of two opposite, but equally misleading, conclusions.

In the first place we find that human beings are everywhere members of groups. They are utterly dependent on their relations with one another within these groups, dependent for their nurture, their modes of living, their economic and spiritual sustenance, and the continuance of their species. At the same time this dependence is quite unlike the dependence of the cell within the organism. The human units are not bound integrally within a single group, as the cells are bound to the organism. They need the group, but not inexorably the group into which they are born. They need the group, but not necessarily this particular group or that. Strong as their attachments may be they can at need be broken, transferred to other groups. Voluntary migration is by no means an uncommon phenomenon. Men are not infrequently attracted away from their own to other groups. Other men can tolerate migra-

---

This selection has been reprinted with the publisher's consent from Robert M. MacIver, *The Web of Government* (New York, The Macmillan Co., 1947), pp. 410-416, 421-439.

tion when some incentive drives them from their original group, and they gradually learn to adjust themselves to the new society.

It is in keeping with this consideration that men generally belong not to one group only but to several at the same time. This is less obvious in primitive society, but even there men are at once members of a family and of a larger kin-group, of some moiety or totem group or classificatory group as well as of the tribe or clan, and possibly also they are members of some cult or secret society or other organization. In any developed society the plurality of memberships is more conspicuous. Beyond the family are the business and the club and the church and the local community and the great state, not to mention the proliferating associations that correspond to many divergent interests of modern man.

With these simple facts before us let us ask how these various memberships are related. In particular, are all the others merely aspects of one inclusive organization? Is there one kind of social unity to which man owes his entire allegiance, one kind that fulfills all his needs? If we are content to take human society as it is the answer is clear: there is no one group, no single form of organization, that incorporates all the rest and wholly circumscribes the social life of man. Diverse groupings exist because man needs them, because no one suffices. Man needs a matrix of society, say the range of community within which he has significant relations, but this matrix is not a form of organization, not a corporate or integral unity. The only way in which the opposing claim can be maintained is to identify the state with the community, and we . . . [can show] the fallacy and the peril of that identification. One Hegelian writer, arguing for the all-inclusive state, bids us consider how narrow and inadequate would be the life of anyone who lived exclusively for the church or exclusively for the family; but he could make the same comment, perhaps with even more effect, about anyone who lived exclusively for the state. The man who can live without society, said Aristotle, is either a beast or a god. But the man who can live exclusively for the state, if indeed such a being exists, is either a tyrant or a slave. . . .

The second major characteristic of human society is a corollary of the first. The individual is never wholly absorbed in his society, wholly responsive to it, wholly accounted for by it. There is a sense in which he remains invincibly insulated. Even if he yearns for total absorption, total surrender, he never fully attains it. Unlike the cells of the organism the individual is a self-directing unit, with some kind or degree of autonomy. His society does not prescribe his every action. Above all, it does not prescribe his every thought. It certainly does not account for his motivations, even when it controls specific behavior

on his part. The social unit is still a self, a focus of being, an individuality. Even in pursuing the ends of the group he is seeking his own ends as well. If he works for others he works also for his own good name, his own prestige, his own advantage. He unites himself to others but he separates himself at the same time. He has always purposes, feelings, thoughts, that are not those of the group, that he does not share with the group. The meanest and the greatest alike lead also a private life. The relations a man weaves with others are always viewed by him from one side of the relationship. He co-operates with a difference, and therefore he competes as well. There is potential conflict in every relationship. A man cannot even worship his God without seeking his private and peculiar good.

In short, every individual is self-enclosed. It has been written: "The heart knoweth its own bitterness and a stranger intermeddleth not with its joy." It may be that social animals living wholly on the level of instinct, like ants and bees, are integrally incorporated in their groups, without self-seeking impulses and centrifugal tendencies. If so, they differ in that respect from man, and the society they build is a totally different kind of structure. The problem of human society everywhere is the adjustment of the ego interest and the group interest. This is the problem not merely of social order but of every social relationship. In endlessly different ways, presided over by its myths and worked out by its techniques, human society offers its changing and sometimes precarious answers to that problem. Every human organization of every kind, whether it be a family, a business, a state, or a church of God, finds some way of reconciling the interest of the individual and the interest of the whole. This fact is the primary condition of the remarkably complex structure of civilized society. It is also the primary condition of the personality of man.

The human ego, the selfhood of the unit, develops early in the child. Within the first circle of the family it soon encounters the demands and prohibitions of the group. From the first dawn of consciousness the ego sets itself over against the world at the same time that it seeks the fulfillment of its utterly dependent being within the world. Its relations to the near members of the family are not determined by the nature outside it, they are also the expression of its own particular nature. They are selective and experimental. At every point the assertions of the self are limited and checked by the counter-assertion of other selves. The discipline of the family group, the inculcation of the family ways, the pervasive direction of the unformed personality of the child, the channeling of its potentialities, meet with resistance as well as with acceptance. Some desires are balked, others are gratified. Habits are formed, but they

are not the indoctrinated anticipation of the native tendencies of the child. Many of them become "second nature," such as the habits of personal cleanliness. But the process of formation has conveyed the impact of external control, of a world that imposes its demands on the ego. With this world the ego can never wholly identify itself. However much affection is combined with the discipline, the difference persists.

If we could follow the psychology of the maturing child as it enters into ever wider schemes of social relationship we should multiply the evidences that the individual is not summed up in the attribute "social animal." The more inclusive or the more intensive the relations into which he enters the more does he maintain, the more does he need to maintain, the autonomy-demanding selfhood that is his from the first. Some men are of course more receptive, more amenable, more self-surrendering than others. But there is always some point of ego insistence. At this point every man is an Athanasius against the world. A man may be wholly responsive to the authority of the state, but he will lord it over his family. A man may accept with no sense of personal frustration the complete authority of his church, but he will be a tyrant over his employees. A man may be submissive to the party line but he is a rebel against constituted authority. There is not, there cannot be, the total surrender of the total self either to the service of society or to the will of all the variant collectivities that compose it.

If we turn to certain of the simpler peoples we may find what at first sight looks like a complete absorption of the unit in the unity. Some modern anthropologists have been discovering that these peoples are so well integrated as social unities that the members of the group tend alike to exhibit the same "basic personality structure," as characteristic of each society as his particular selfhood is of each individual. This viewpoint marks an interesting development of social psychology, but it does not in the least imply that the member of the simple society is the mere simulacrum of its social type or that in so far as he conforms to the prevailing pattern he is wholly the selfless and devoted servant of the common purpose and ideals of the tribe. The mold of the society is impressed on its members—and this is true in degree for every kind and every range of society, from the family to the nation—but the members are not clay for the society as the potter. It is their selfhood that takes on the social pattern; this is the mode in which the autonomy-seeking self accommodates itself to the prevailing *mores*. But it still exists in its selfhood. The Comanche, for example, exhibit, so we are told, a type pattern of robust and confident personality. Conformity to type does not mean subjection



to authority. And, even so, there are still many differences between self and self, many variations from conformity. In the more complex society the type itself is elusive and endlessly varied and subject to many exceptions.

The final objection to the total-surrender doctrine lies elsewhere. When we speak of the unity of the state or of the solidarity of any group we can mean only a consensus of ends or purposes or ideals. Men are united not because they are alike in physical build or in mental structure, not because they want the same things. These attributes may be a condition of their unity, or they may not. They may provoke conflict or they may be a basis of co-operation. Not the perception of likeness, not alone what has been called the "consciousness of kind" but also the way of life, the sense of common interests to be sustained by common endeavor, creates the unity of any group. The sense of the common over-rides the differences within the group but it does not abolish them. They remain, for the most part, on another level. Often the appreciation of the common is intensified by the threat to it, real or imagined, from the hostile difference of another group. Where the common is thus threatened, internal differences are often completely in abeyance. But normally the range of the common does not preclude the play of difference. The unity it sustains is not all-embracing. It admits many divergences of interest and of goal. It admits the conflicts that these divergences engender, provided they do not reject or cleave asunder the basis of community. Since human beings are always variant the common is likely to be more securely established if its guardians do not demand the complete conformity that contradicts or suppresses such differences as are not irreconcilable with the basic unity. The recognition of this fact is the major insight of democracy.

The basic unity is thus a consensus about values cherished in common, embodied in accepted usages and relationships, pursued through some inclusive organization. And here we reach again the ineluctable fact that defeats all arguments for the total surrender of the unit to the unity. The values that are pursued in common are realized only in the individuals who compose the whole. They are values only as they are attained, enjoyed, fulfilled in the experience of men, in the quality of their living. The group, the nation, looks to the future, but by the future we must mean here the continuance or the enhancement of values in being and in prospect for the generations that follow. The collectivity as such never experiences these values. The collectivity is either an abstraction or a mechanism. It is a mechanism if we think of it as the organization through which the members participate in a common life and pursue the values they can

realize only in their own lives. It is an abstraction if we think of it as a value in itself, apart from the persons in whom values are embodied. It is an abstraction—a false abstraction—if we venerate it as such, if we attach to it the attributes of honor and glory and power, if we regard it as existing in its own right above the rights that we ascribe to men. . . .

#### THE MULTI-GROUP SOCIETY

Our main argument to this point is that the relation of man to the many groups and forms of organization to which he is more nearly or more distantly, more deeply or more superficially, attached is not solved by making one of these, whether the state or any other, the sole or inclusive object of his devotion, the one social focus of his being. There are other forms of order than the simple uni-centered order. There is the order of the balance and inter-adjustment of many elements. The conception of the all-inclusive all-regulating state is as it were a pre-Copernican conception of the social system. It appeals to the primitive sense of symmetry. As we explore more deeply the social universe we must discard it and frame a conception more adequate to social reality. In this exploration we learn, among other things, to understand better the nature of the multi-group society of modern man.

With this theme we shall deal here very briefly. We start from the fact that men have many different kinds of interest, that some of these are universal, in the sense that they are pursued by all men everywhere—all seek alike the satisfaction of certain elementary needs—while some are particular, making appeal to some men and not to others. Now since organization conveys power men learn to join with others so as to pursue their interests more effectively, each for each as well as each for all. Some of these interests are purely distributive, as are most economic interests. These we may speak of as like interests. The benefits of organization then accrue to each separately, so that the proceeds become private dividends, privately enjoyed by each. Other interests are *common*, in such wise that what each receives does not divide the product of the collectivity or lessen the benefits available to all the rest. To this class belong our cultural interests, the advance of knowledge, the exploration of art, of thought, of literature, of religion, and so forth. While the individual explorer or creator may receive particular awards, honors, or emoluments, the things that he explores or creates are potentially for all men. The wells of knowledge and of inspiration are not less full for the number who drink of them. When a man makes shoes it is for private use. When he makes a work of art or literature it is generally available, in one way or another, for the enjoyment of those who care for it.

Thus we can distinguish two types of organization, according to the nature of their product, leaving aside those that are intermediate or that in some manner combine both functions. Let us consider particularly the character of the second type. The cultural interests of men are exceedingly diverse and they exist on every level from the highest to the lowest. Many men have many minds. Children subjected to the same conditions and to the same influences react in very different ways. The attitudes of every group differ from the attitudes of every other. There is much incompatibility of outlook, of opinion and belief, of interpretation, of enjoyment, of the whole realization of life. Different men find very different sustenance within the fields of culture. In the seeking of this sustenance they are most themselves, most alive, most creative. Whether the sustenance be refined or vulgar, ample or meager, it is always that through which man seeks fulfillment. Everything else on earth is for the spirit that is in man nothing but apparatus or mechanism.

To satisfy this need men weave manifold relationships with their fellows. These extend from the give-and-take of love or comradeship through informal neighborly groupings for recreation, gossip, and so forth, up to the world-wide religious brotherhoods. There are two conclusive reasons why the numerous organizations thus engendered cannot be co-ordinated, over any range of territory great or small, under the aegis of the state. One is that the various organizations of the same cultural species are not only dissimilar in viewpoint, in method, in system of values, but actually antipathetic, alien, or hostile to one another in these respects. The differences are not reconcilable, nor are they so unimportant that they could be omitted from some universal charter or creed that would seek to embrace the different faiths within a single organizational fold. There are schools and styles in every form of art, in every field of cultural expression. The followers of any one abjure the other schools and styles. They take delight in their own, in the difference itself. Religions may alike proclaim the brotherhood of man or the fatherhood of God, but each has its own conception of the fatherhood. To co-ordinate them all into one would be to destroy their characteristic qualities, to drain them of their vitality. Co-ordination could be imposed only by sheer compulsion, and there is essential truth, even if the statement be too strongly worded, in the comment of the absolutist Hobbes, "Belief and unbelief never follow men's commands." Here we reach the second reason why neither the state nor any other form of organization can be all-embracing. Every way of life and every way of thought is nourished from within. It is the conviction that counts, the habit of mind, the devo-

tion to a cause, the impulse to artistic expression, the congeniality of the group. It cannot be controlled from without, it cannot be directed by an indifferent or alien power. The creative force of all culture lies in its own spontaneity. It is killed by compulsion, reduced to a lifeless mechanism. Only the arrogance of the tyrant or of the dogmatist denies this truth. The dogmatist, secure in his own faith, would refuse other men the right to theirs, blindly seeking to destroy in them the same spirit of devotion from which he nourishes his own being.

This truth was appreciated by T. H. Green, Hegelian though he was. In his *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation* he put forward the thesis that the state should not command the doing of things the value of which depends on the spirit in which they are performed and not on the mere externals of performance. This thesis is relevant to the whole area of cultural pursuits, though of course there arise marginal issues. We may put forward as a corollary of this thesis the further point that wherever actions are of such a kind that the performance of them by one group in one manner or style does not impede the performance of them by other groups in a diverse or contradictory manner or style such actions should not be on intrinsic grounds subject to co-ordination by the state or any other collectivity. When we say "on intrinsic grounds" we mean that, for example, no one should be forbidden to worship in his own way because the ruling powers entertain a religious objection to that form of worship. If however the worship involved, say, head-hunting or any other interference with the liberties of other men or any infringement of a criminal law that itself was not motivated by religious considerations but only by regard for public safety, then the performance would be subject to ban or control on extrinsic grounds. Our formula applies to the whole business of the expression of opinion, to the great realms of art and of thought in every form. One man is not precluded from advancing his opinion because another man has a contrary opinion. One man is not prevented from worshipping his own God because another man worships a different kind of God. Thus the objective conditions of public order do not demand uniformity in the cultural realm.

There is some contrast here between the cultural realm and the realm presided over by the organizations that fall predominantly within our second type. Economic activities, for example, cannot be left to the free arbitrament of individuals and groups without serious interference with public order. Thus an employer cannot lower the wages of his employees below the prevailing rate without seriously affecting the business of other employers who



may have more concern for the welfare of their workers. He cannot extend the hours of labor without doing harm to his fellow employers as well as to his employees. He cannot "run his own business in his own way" as though it were a private imperium islanded from the rest of the world. No more can a man rightly claim to use his property in any way that seems good to him. His property not only is the fruit of the co-operative labor of many men but also it is the potential if not the actual source of the livelihood of others. If he neglects it, lets it run to waste or ruin, or actually destroys it he is injuring his fellows. He does the same thing if, say, he buys a patent from an inventor so as to prevent its exploitation, for the sake of his own greater profit. But there is no end of such examples. The economic order is a vast network of interdependence.

It might be claimed that a like statement could be made concerning the cultural order. A man cannot ventilate his opinions, cannot write a popular novel, cannot even worship his God without having some influence somehow on others. But there is a crucial difference. One man influences another in this manner because the other is freely responsive to that influence. We may adjudge the influence good or bad. We may condemn and oppose it. That also is our right. Opinions and creeds are for ever in conflict. Every man must find and respond to his own. There is no other way save compulsion, and we have already shown how alien and perilous that is. Moreover, with respect to economic relations the effect of one man's action on that of another is external and even automatic. The effect is measurable. We have a common standard, an objective index. Economic advantage, economic prosperity, has the same meaning for all men, even though some are more devoted to it than others. Thus the main objections that apply to the control of opinion are not relevant here. There is in fact only one relevant limit to specific economic controls, and that is precisely the consideration how far such controls conduce to the general economic welfare, how far they are efficient, how far they may go without restraining the spirit of initiative and enterprise, the spring of energy, vision, and responsibility, without which organization degenerates into the wasteful routine of bureaucracy.

Let us return, however, to our first conclusion, that the many cultural organizations of society have not and cannot have any one focus, cannot without losing their identity and their function be amalgamated and absorbed as mere departments of the state. Now we face the question of the interadjustment of all these organizations, and of the groups who main-

tain them, within the ordered yet free life of the community. Here is the essential problem of our multi-group society.

In every range and at every stage of social life this problem exists. In the simplest societies it is embryonic, and it reaches its full proportions only in the ambit of the modern nation. In the world of Western civilization it first became acute when various religious groups broke away from the universalism of the mediaeval church. The assumption that every community, every state, must have a single religion had a tremendous hold over the minds of most men. Only the sheer impossibility of maintaining this assumption at length persuaded them that they could live decently together, as members of one community, with those who professed a different faith. Centuries of persecution, war, and civil strife were needed to achieve this result. Manifestations of the old intolerance persist in the more liberal states while new forms of it, not associated with a religious principle, have appeared in some other states and shown a virulence not surpassed by the most extreme instances of earlier times. The full requirement of cultural liberty has rarely, if ever, been realized. In democratic countries it is now *politically* established. These countries have advanced far since the days when the king of one of them announced that he would "make the extirpation of the heretics his principal business." Gradually they passed from persecution to toleration and from toleration to the position that a man's religion is no concern of the state. The Edict of Nantes in 1598 was the first acknowledgment of a Roman Catholic government that "heretics" should be accorded civil rights, but even as late as 1776 the greatest of French radicals could assert that it was "impossible for men to live at peace with those they believe to be damned." In Protestant countries Roman Catholics were at length "tolerated," but it was only in 1819 that even England admitted them to citizenship. As for Jews, they have suffered longer and more grievously from persecution and the denial of civil rights than those who professed any other religion.

The principle set out in the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, that no law shall be enacted respecting an establishment of religion, has in effect been accepted by most democratic countries as well as by some others that cannot be placed in that category. But the problem of the multi-group society is not solved merely by the formal recognition of equality before the law. Such equality can exist while nevertheless minority groups or groups in an inferior economic or social position may be subject to such discrimination that they are practically excluded

from participation in the life of the community. An outstanding example is the situation of the Negroes in the United States, particularly in the South. Other groups suffer discrimination to different degrees. The Jewish people are exposed to it but so in a measure are various ethnic groups, especially those of Eastern European countries, while yet stronger disabilities are applied against the Chinese, the Japanese, and the people of India. If we add to these groups the American Indians, the Filipinos, the Mexicans and other Latin-Americans we get the picture of a country constitutionally dedicated to the equality of men that nevertheless exhibits a complex pattern of rifts and fissures ramifying across the life of the community.

In different countries the problem takes different shapes. While in the United States minority groups are dispersed throughout the population, in some other countries they have a territorial locus, as in the Balkan area. Sometimes ethnic differences are associated with differences of religion. Often the disadvantaged groups occupy an inferior economic status. Not infrequently there is political as well as social and economic discrimination. This situation is found in its extreme form in colonial possessions, where the usual relation of majority and minority is reversed in favor of a dominant alien group.

Under all conditions the discrimination of group against group is detrimental to the wellbeing of the community. Those who are discriminated against are balked in their social impulses, are prevented from developing their capacities, become warped or frustrated, secretly or openly nurse a spirit of animosity against the dominant group. Energies that otherwise might have been devoted to constructive service are diverted and consumed in the friction of fruitless conflict. The dominant group, fearing the loss of its privileges, takes its stand on a traditional conservatism and loses the power of adapting itself to the changing times. The dominated, unless they are sunk in the worse apathy of sullen impotence, respond to subversive doctrines that do not look beyond the overthrow of the authority they resent. Each side conceives a false image of the other, denying their common humanity, and the community is torn asunder.

There is no way out of this impasse, apart from revolution, except the gradual readjustment of group relations in the direction of equality of opportunity—not merely of legal equality. Since this readjustment requires the abandonment of habits and traditions, the breaking of taboos, the reconstruction of the distorted images cherished by each group of the other, and the recognition that the narrower interests and fears and prides

that stimulate discrimination and prejudice are adverse to the common good and often empty or vain, its achievement can be effected only through the arduous and generally slow processes of social education. The sense of community, dissipated by the pervading specialization of interests, needs to be reinforced. The common values of the embracing culture need to be reasserted and again made vital. The provision of equality of opportunity will not of itself bring about any such result. It will serve chiefly by removing a source of division that stands obdurately in the way of social cohesion. Only when this obstacle is removed can the positive values of the multi-group society be cultivated—if we have the wisdom to seek and to find them.

The sense of the need of community, if not the sense of community, is still alive and seeks embodiment. It is witnessed to by men's devotion to the nation and by their attachment to some local community they feel—or once felt—to be their home. But these bonds do not satisfy the need, do not sufficiently provide the experience of effective solidarity. The nation is too wide and too diverse. The local community is too heterogeneous, if it is large, or too limited, if it is small. Often the attachment to it is nostalgic or merely sentimental. So the unit gropes for a more satisfying unity, seeking to recover the spirit of co-operative living that animated the uni-group society. Sometimes men seek to recover it by methods that would re-impose the old order on the new. They would restore the myth of the uni-group society; they would make the all-inclusive state the sufficient focus of our moral and spiritual being; they would even, as totalitarians, ruthlessly co-ordinate out of existence our cultural heterogeneity. But there is no road back. The course of civilization is as irreversible as time itself. We have left behind the one-room social habitation of our ancestors. We have built ourselves a house of many mansions. Somehow we must learn to make it ours.

#### THE SOCIAL MECHANISM

The problem we approached in the previous section is rendered more difficult by the increasing complexity of social organization. On the one hand every interest that in any sense is shared by a number of people sets up its own association, so that in recent times these modes of organization have proliferated beyond the knowledge of any earlier age. On the other hand the functions of the state have grown enormously, partly because it must take cognizance of the new multiplicity of associations and regulate their relations to one another and to itself, partly because the



ceaseless developments of technology make its task of overall regulation much more elaborate than heretofore. The total result is that the direction of nearly all important concerns has fallen into the hands of a special category of managers or specialists and that the ordinary man, whatever may be his intelligence or his insight, has little voice in the direction of affairs.

Every association has two aspects. It is a group of men who are united because they share the interest for which the association stands. It is also an institutionalized system for the doing of certain things. A relatively few leaders, specialists, and agents operate the system in the name of all the members. A very few control these operations. They alone are familiar with the mechanism; the great majority of the members know little or nothing about it. Inevitably the latter entrust it to the leaders. If the organization is a democratic one the members as a whole have a final voice over major policies, but the implementation of these policies and generally the formulation and the presentation of policies is in the hands of the managers of the association. The managers in turn, if we use the term broadly enough, fall into two classes, those who exercise overall direction, translating objectives into policies, and those who operate the mechanism in the furtherance of these policies. The first category is that of the leaders, the second that of the experts or officials. If the organization is a large-scale one the role of the experts is magnified. The social mechanism is then so complex that those who are familiar with its working acquire authority on that account, possessing considerable control over those who use the services of the organization and also affecting larger policies by their manipulation of the processes through which they may be carried into effect.

Thus the levers of social control have been further removed from the reach of the common man. From of old the seats of government, hedged round by the myths of class and sanctity and sovereignty, were guarded against profane contacts. Government ceased to be in any strict sense an organ of the community, the political agency of the people. It claimed a transcendent right, which was in effect the right of the ruling class to govern in their own interest, the right to dominate. The growth of democracy restored the only intelligible logic of government, that which construes it as the agency of the whole over which it governs. But the new dimensions of politics have tended in another way to place the operations of government beyond the reach of the citizen. The political apparatus is so complicated and its functions are so inter-locked that the

common man cannot check responsibility or gauge the conditions of achievement or even discover the orientation of policy. He is the more at the mercy of his leaders on the one hand and of his officials and experts on the other. If his leaders are strong they can make the mechanism serve their own purposes. If his leaders are weak the mechanism will overpower them. In the latter case bureaucracy, the vice of officialdom, will triumph, laying its deadening hand on all enterprise and stifling the processes of adaptation to changing conditions. The masters of the routines will assert the sacred traditions of their kind.

In earlier times this danger had little relevance outside the sphere of government. There was no other large-scale association until the church of the Middle Ages set up its hierarchy and embarked on its universal mission. But the modern world has developed a multitude of expansive associations. Many social activities that formerly were conducted through direct personal relationships have been assigned to these impersonal agencies with their more remote controls. We must include here not only the organization of business in all its forms, operating as industrial corporations and combines, trade associations, cartels, banking systems, chain-store systems, newspaper syndicates, and so forth, but also the large-scale associations of the professions and the national and international unions of labor. Beyond these there are the associations dedicated to all the branches of culture, to all the schools of art and of thought. Science is organized through foundations and through world-wide academies. Education has its own vast network of organization. There are ramifying associations devoted to the various forms of sport, both on the professional and on the amateur level. The business of entertainment is directed by syndicates. Scarcely any aspect of life eluded the associational network. The institutionalization of human relationships is the counterpart of the mechanization of the processes of production.

Some social philosophers have claimed that in consequence the sense of the whole that sustained the life of man in simpler times, the sense of community, has been dissipated, that in the multiplicity of memberships each demanding its partial and divisive allegiance the integrity of the social being has disappeared. Instead of belonging to a community with its close spontaneous personal ties he belongs to a heterogeneous array of de-personalized associations. But those who prefer this charge exhibit at the same time a reactionary conservatism in favor of a uni-centered society. They do not meet the modern problem. . . . They have no solution that is appropriate to the world in which we live. They are right, however, in empha-

sizing the need for a re-discovery of community and in pointing out, even if sometimes in an exaggerated way, the danger that man may become enmeshed and socially frustrated in the ever more elaborate social mechanism that he has constructed.

Let us first consider a few aspects of that danger. The new institutionalization canalizes and specializes functions and relationships formerly conducted as the personal responsibility of man to man. Now they fall under a hierarchy of controls. The great advantages of the division of labor have often been dwelt upon. Here we are looking at the debit side of the account. Apart from a decreasing number of farmers, free-lance artists, and professional workers most men carry out their economic activities within a system that prescribes the methods and policies they are to follow and closely limits and defines their responsibilities. Whether he is a servant of the state or of a private corporation makes relatively little difference in this respect. The journalist does not write as he pleases, but as the editor directs; the editor does not direct as he pleases, but as the syndicate dictates. The businessman is the agent of a company that decides his role; the company is a branch of a corporation that decides its procedure and its product. The shop-keeper is a manager appointed by the chain store, which dictates what he shall stock, at what price he shall sell, and how he shall regulate his accounts. The teacher may have the daily routine of his teaching meticulously determined for him, and the assignments he gives to his pupils may first of all be assigned to himself. And so it goes in all the vocations. In plant and laboratory, in office and in committee room, men everywhere have their specialized and narrowed tasks, working as cogs in a machine that runs regardless of their emotions and their desires.

It would be easy to multiply instances and thus to convey the impression, as do some writers on this theme, that modern man is hopelessly enslaved by his own inventions. Mechanism, they cry, is in the saddle and rides mankind. We could in the same manner sustain the viewpoint of the exponents of the "managerial revolution," that one specialized category within the total scheme of specialization, the managers *par excellence*, hold in their hands the reins and the whip to drive the chariot of state. Or we could use this evidence to stress the disorganization of a segmented society and the lack of a sense of goals, the *anomie*, that characterizes its members. Or we could picture the relentless process of a universal bureaucracy that smothers beneath its deadening rule all the creative motions of society. With Oswald Spengler we might prophetically gaze on a whole civilization the life-blood of which is draining out to its destined extinction, or

with Roberto Michels we might contemplate a social order in which all new and vigorous leadership is soon caught in the toils of the oligarchical necessities of large-scale organization and forever fails to achieve its ends.

All these thinkers are the more impressive because they see, or choose to see, only one aspect of the complex truth about modern society. Man's creative energies are still active and change the world in ways often hidden from his foreknowledge. Leadership still asserts itself, responsive to movements that stir in the hearts of the people. The thinkers we have mentioned refuse, in the manner of the more forsaken conservatives of every age, to accept a problem as a problem. Since they cannot restore the past they deny the future. And in so doing they deny the constructive forces of the present.

The trend to social mechanization is one only of the characteristics of our age. It is fostered by conditions that carry promises as well as threats. The question now as always is one of the inter-adjustment of various factors, presided over by the prevailing values of the times. The social mechanism is no juggernaut that rolls on regardless of those who may be crushed beneath it. Whatever dangers it threatens can be controlled by the same unrelenting intelligence that created it. The picture presented by our nostalgic thinkers must be corrected by a more balanced perception of social reality.

It helps us to correct the picture if we turn our thoughts from the social mechanism to the complex pattern of objectives—public and private, co-operative and conflicting, group and individual—men pursue in and through it. Here there is ceaseless motion and commotion, struggle and accord. Some associations pursue unlike or even contradictory objectives without manifest clash; each has its own body of members. Some seek objectives that are directly antagonistic to those pursued by others. Within each association, however limited or however inclusive, there is change and instability; there is always some contention over its objectives and always some division over the means to accepted objectives. Thus, to begin with, we get rid of the notion that the vast inclusive social mechanism moves of its own momentum, outside the controls of men. It is not unified, all of one piece. It is operated from many centers of direction, never wholly in accord. It is incessantly changeful, and its changes are responsive to changing discernments of good and ill.

We might next consider some of the conditions that help to liberate men from the dangers inherent in the mechanics of their civilization. It is by fostering these conditions that the dangers can be thwarted, and the



consciousness of these dangers, if rightly directed and wisely organized, is the best safeguard against them. By right direction we mean the focusing of attention on those aspects of the total situation that are actually or potentially constructive against the dangers it also contains.

Here we place first the growth of the democratic spirit, the increasing assertion—if we look not at the moment but in the perspective of history—by the masses of the people of their right to control their own affairs and to make their leaders responsive to their will. In some countries this movement is balked, in others it is misled into devious ways; but it remains a great and unexhausted force, and it has advanced most in the countries where the social mechanism has reached its most elaborate development. What Mannheim calls the principle of fundamental democratization has taken hold of modern society. It is the complement and concomitant of the forces that make modern society. The new mobility, the impacts of diverse faiths and customs, the tempo of change, the incessant formations and re-formations of groups, the pressures of group against group, the stir of industrial transformation, the many controls over many forms of power, the ease of communication through many channels, the breaking of the cultural bars set up by class against class, the insecurity of status and often of livelihood, all the modes of urbanized living—these conditions dispose men everywhere to demand a voice in the determination of their affairs on every level and on the other hand make it impossible for the heads and managers of great organizations to carry on without the active consensus of those beneath. It is true that this consensus may under some conditions be manipulated, that the people may be played upon and grossly deceived for a time, that they may be the victims of the mass emotions that now have a greater opportunity for expression and development than ever before. But certainly the insistence of the broad democratic demand is inherent in the nature of our civilization.

We have already dwelt on the major advantages of democracy and on the conditions that have fostered it. We should add here that by maintaining the responsibility of government, by opening its operations to the fresh breezes of public discussion and inquiry and by its periodic activity in changing its leaders, it furnished the surest medicine against the perpetuation of bureaucracy. Its success in this enterprise depends on its alertness, on the level of public education. But democracy is in this respect also unlike other forms of government, in that its very existence is a function of the social awareness, the vigilant spirit of its citizens.

The efficacy of democracy in making social institutions, as well as the

officials who administer them and the leaders who preside over them, serviceable and responsive to the emergent needs of society, is seen if we consider its role in other than political relations. Take the economic corporation, for example. Here too the drives of power and of private advantage may induce the directors to neglect the interests of the shareholders, or the security of position may encourage in them complacency and inertia. Competition may be inadequate to stay these tendencies, but the alertness of a few shareholders who stir up the rest will have a vitalizing influence. Or again the corporation may adopt policies prejudicial to the welfare of its workers, but nothing has checked such policies so adequately as the lively concern and counter-activity of the workers themselves. Similarly the trade union is likely, unless its members actively participate in its affairs, to fall into the hands of truculent and self-advertising leaders, or even of sheer racketeers, who abuse their responsibilities for their own profit and glory. Or take, say, one of the numerous organizations devoted to the support of some worthy aim of social welfare. If the members who subscribe the funds are content to leave the entire control of it to some director and secretary, with an honorific board of trustees who fulfill their responsibilities by lending their names to its letter-head, it is most apt in the course of time to become a comfortable nest for the said officials and their underlings, losing all the vitality that animated its origin. Examples could be multiplied to establish the claim that only the pervading presence of the spirit of democracy, outside as well as within the state, can maintain the flexibility of institutions and prevent the rigor of bureaucracy or the dominance of those who divert the institutions from public functions to their own narrow ends.

It is significant that this operation of the democratic spirit, keeping institutions where they belong and making them continuously serviceable to the whole people they are intended to serve, has perhaps been most admirably illustrated in the smaller advanced countries, such as Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Finland, where the temptations of power on a national scale are lacking. These countries have an elaborate institutional structure, but social education is highly developed, the sense of class is not sharply defined, there is a balanced perception of the relation of need to opportunity, and the people are co-operatively and tolerantly assertive in the control of their affairs.

Another important development to offset the perils of institutional rigidity is the growing recognition of the nature and the requirements of personality. This recognition has both emerged out of and been active in creating the multiplicity of institutions and social groups. Many men have many

minds. They need different cultural sustenance. They seek it through the diversity of faiths and styles and schools and moral codes. The intolerance of dogma and the blindness of power have eternally been suppressive of human nature, have thwarted its potentialities and fought against the primary law of organic life, that the higher the capacity the more variant are the modes of its fulfillment. The different types and varieties of personality must seek and find different kinds of adjustment within the framework of society. There are common needs as the basis of the common order, and to assure that common order there is a common discipline that all must undergo. There are divergent needs that call for differences of adjustment, for different systems of relationship, different outlets. The reconciliation of the common and the divergent is simply another side of the most ancient problem of politics, the reconciliation of liberty and order. Democracy supplies the form of solution, but the application of it is a task that has no end. The growth of the social sciences, also one of the signs of the times, is throwing new light on the nature of the task. As psychology teaches us better concerning the various personality categories with their various deviations and complexes we get rid of our primitive classification of men as moral sheep and immoral goats. The psychiatrist, the sociologist, the social psychologist, the social worker, sound out the conditions of readjustment. The student of law and the student of government take up the tale and seek to apply the lesson. So we have been changing our conception of the normal and the abnormal. We have new insight concerning criminals and tyrants and terrorists and various other types that threaten the orderly processes of society. And, above all, we are realizing the more that other methods than coercion are needed in order to rule aright, that government has to develop the skills that go with understanding, and that in so doing it must enter into co-operative relations with social organizations of many kinds.

The new recognition of the nature of personality and the modern multiplicity of associations go hand in hand. Together they refute the philosophy that would centralize all human activity within the clasp of the state. Together they provide the facilities the democratic state must employ to remain flexible and dynamic.

























